

ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE

CHARTER SCHOOLS' ACADEMIC CULTURE

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The purpose of this study was to explore the academic outcomes of African-American (AA) male students in a single-gender classrooms in hopes of providing meaningful insight and as well as recommendations for intended further research to close the prevalent achievement gap. AA male students have been disproportionately targeted as “chronic underachievers” when compared to their female counterparts. The culture and climate of the school was closely scrutinized, interviews were administered with teachers and an instructional leader, and the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) report was analyzed to examine their performance snapshot.

Fifty eight participants responded to a 4-point ordinal Likert scale survey to gauge attitudes on the effectiveness of single-gender education by students and parents. Four

teachers (two seventh grade and eighth grade ELA and math) were interviewed. Data were collected over a period of three days to delve into the single-gender school environment. Classroom observations were administered to observe noticeable behaviors before and after lunch, evaluate instructional delivery (evident signs of gender-specific practices), view classroom layout, evaluate classroom activities, witness if gender of teacher has impact on student achievement, and observe teacher-student and peer interactions.

Quantitative data revealed students responded that gender of the teacher does not impact their academic achievement, teacher set high expectations, parents are involved in their educational endeavors, they did not particularly like the single-gender environment but their school provided a positive school culture. The data also revealed teachers and administrators believe in creating a strong school culture, challenging their students, the development of character and leadership, and providing a cultural-responsive yet rigorous curriculum will contribute to the academic achievement outcomes of AA males in single-gender classrooms. Results yielded from this descriptive case study provided future implications and premeditated recommendations for researchers to delve deeper into the phenomenon of the single-gender environment and its impact on AA male achievement.

A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE
CHARTER SCHOOLS' ACADEMIC CULTURE

A DISSERTATION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Historically, the United States educational system is known as the cornerstone of human development (civic duty and character building) and the foundation of preparing students for their careers; education is known to be a federal interest, yet it is a state's responsibility. Traditionally, public education has been at the forefront of preparing students for the workforce which has functioned in co-education classrooms for hundreds of years. Due to the many challenges factored in educating a diverse American student population across the nation, educators are trying many instructional strategies to impact learning outcomes. Many schools are now implementing a paradigm shift towards single-gendered classrooms in efforts to improve the quality of education within the public sector. With that being said, would the separation of students according to gender contribute to a quality education for low-income and minority students? According to Hubbard and Datnow (2005), single-sex public schools have been utilized to improve the education of low-income and minority students.

For years, there have been numerous attempts at improving academic achievement including such strategies as Head Start for preschools, tutoring, mentoring, and enrichment programs. According to research, single-gender classrooms have been used as a platform for competition and giving children the opportunity to grow

academically (Hubbard & Datnow, 2005). A compelling interest in single-gender public education is supported by empirical research, which highlights that students' learning varies according to gender and ethnicity. In a traditional classroom setting, teacher expectations for African-American (AA) males are far lower than their counterparts in middle to upper class neighborhoods (Hubbard & Datnow, 2005). Recent studies have focused on the phenomenon of single-gender education because it deviates from a "gender stratified norm" that is heavily practiced in traditional school districts.

Statement of the Problem

In urban school districts, alarming statistics prove that closing the achievement gap among low-income and minority student continues to be a daunting issue in education. Across the nation, low-income and minority students continue to lag behind their counterparts in academic performance. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2009), the achievement gap among African-American males is over 20% in grades 4 to 8 as compared to other racial male students in the state of Georgia; this shows there is a clear indication of how important it is to narrow that gap. What could possibly be a solution for our low-income and minority students to improve the quality of education for African-American students with a particular focus on the African-American male student? A wealth of knowledge has shown that female students have an innate behavior of performing well academically in the classroom. Conversely, their male counterparts seem to be targeted as "low-performers" in the classroom. According to Lynn, Bacon, Totten, Bridges, and Jennings (2010), AA male students are among the lowest percentile when school achievement is measured.

Lynn et al. (2010) also stated that when AA males matriculate from middle to high school, they show little to no academic success. Why is this so significant when it comes to single-gender education? According to Child Trends (2015), the dropout rate of AA males reached 35.8% in 1987 but has recently declined to a 10% dropout rate. Although these findings are seen to be a victory for the AA male population, gender differences indicated that male students have a higher dropout rate than female students. In 2014, the dropout rate of male students between the ages of 16 and 24 reached 55% versus their female counterparts who had a dropout rate of 45% (Child Trends, 2015).

A number of explanations have been conjured up on how to differentiate between the co-educational classrooms versus the single-gender classroom and how it contributes to student learning outcomes (Smyth, 2010). Most studies indicate that boys have different temperaments from girls in the classroom (Smyth, 2010). For example, males interact in the classroom differently than females such as “calling out” answers, being disruptive and dominating practical activities (i.e., laboratory work and computer sessions) (Smyth, 2010). Most importantly, the male presence in the classroom tends to have a negative effect on female academic achievement; in other words, boys tend to create a distraction in the classroom (Smyth, 2010). Single-gender education should be discussed in a broader social context and how that is correlated to the underachievement of male students. Male underachievement occurs due to the absence of male role models, gender-specific differences and the emergence of a “laddish” culture (Smyth, 2010).

Identification of Dependent and Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

Academic achievement in a single-gender classroom; single-gendered classrooms were the focal point to capture AA male academic performance.

Independent Variables

The independent variables are (a) Rigor and Relevance of Curriculum, (b) Student Management, (c) Student Engagement, (d) Professional Learning Communities, (e) School Culture, (f) Subject Matter, (g) Expected Outcomes of Single- Gender Education (students, teachers, admin and parents), (h) Gender of Teacher, and (i) Gender-Specific Learning Styles.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to discover how single-gender classrooms contribute to improving academic achievement of AA males in low-income neighborhoods. The research was used to examine the following independent variables—rigor and relevance of the curriculum, student behavior, professional development for single gender instruction, school culture, subject content, quality of instruction, expected outcomes of single-gender education, and the gender of the teacher. An analysis of research data was used to determine if there is a direct correlation among the independent variables and the dependent variable, and the impact on student academic achievement.

At this stage of the research, the emergence of single-gender classrooms and their affect on AA male learning outcomes was generally defined as improving the quality of education in single-gender classrooms in efforts to improve the underachievement rate.

The study primarily focused on schools in the private sector or choice school districts located in the Atlanta metropolitan area. The overarching intended purpose of single-gender instruction is to improve academic achievement of AA male students in middle school grades which will lead to closing the achievement gap, drive student success, and improve student learning outcomes.

Factors that were considered in the case study were gender-specific instructional strategies, gender-specific learning styles, and a male presence in the classroom. Ibanez (2011) exclaimed that teachers who are well-trained in gender-specific instructional strategies will be more effective and consistent than those teachers who are not highly trained. Teachers who attend professional development in single-gender settings are able to apply techniques for the population they serve. According to research, parents should also be involved in the decision making process to produce greater results from implementing single-gender instruction (Ibanez, 2011). Ultimately, teachers should utilize instructional strategies that are organized, personalized, and socio-cultured and create an environment that is “boy-friendly.”

Research Questions

In order to fully explore and gain as much clarity about single-gender education as it relates to a social, academic, and psychological context of African-American male students, the following focal research questions are included in the case study:

RQ1: How does the presence of male teachers’ impact AA male behavior in the single-gender classrooms?

- RQ2: What are the perceptions of students and teachers regarding the impact of teacher expectations on AA male student academic achievement?
- RQ3: What are the perceptions students and teachers regarding the impact of leader expectations on AA male student academic achievement?
- RQ4: What are the perceptions of students and teachers regarding the impact of disposition of instructional leader on AA male student academic achievement?
- RQ5: What are the perceptions of parent expectations regarding the impact of single-gender instruction on AA male academic achievement?
- RQ6: How do AA males describe their educational experience in a single gender classroom?
- RQ7: How is differentiation of instruction implemented in single-gender classrooms?
- RQ8: How has gender-based practices contributed to improving the academic achievement of AA male students?
- RQ9: What are the perceptions of Professional Learning Communities regarding the impact of AA male academic achievement?
- RQ10: What are the perceptions of gender-based teaching strategies regarding the impact of AA male academic achievement?
- RQ11: What are the perceptions of gender of the teacher regarding the impact of AA male academic achievement?

Significance of the Study

The results of the descriptive study have shed light on the single-gender classroom phenomenon and hopefully encourage mainstream public schools to practice single-gender strategies as well. It was the researcher's belief that the case study will indeed fill in the gaps of the research in single-gender education and close the "unfortunate" achievement gap that exists between AA male students and their counterparts in low-income urban neighborhoods.

American education continues to evolve and change policies and procedures to improve the quality of education and instruction for students nationwide. However, low-income and minority students tend to fall through the cracks or become marginalized due to the underpinnings of urban school education. Urban school districts struggle with trying to provide an immense amount of help for low-income students and appease their local school boards to produce immaculate test scores all at the same time. It is a fine line between providing specific instructional strategies for low-income students and improving reading and math levels from below basic to proficiency. What does this have to do with the male student population?

The African-American male student population is one of the most endangered species known to man simply because of the attitudes and behaviors they develop during their adolescence. AA males are dealt with an "uneven hand" which targets them for disciplinary action and are usually sanctioned for subsequent disruptive behaviors (Scott, Allen, & Lewis, 2014). Research provides a wealth of knowledge on how females tend

to overshadow their counterparts in the classroom but research does not illuminate on the significance of single-gender classrooms.

It is of most importance that schools in the public sector shift towards single-gender classrooms because it would benefit both girls and boys. Most studies on single-gender education have been done from a quantitative approach, which captures the statistical data of this phenomenon; however, a qualitative approach illuminates a deeper understanding of the functions and operations of the single-gender practice. When taking into account a child's learning process and stages of development, the school is responsible for shaping students into scholars who will have the ability to compete globally.

With this intention, educators have to ensure that all students are provided with equal educational opportunities; ultimately educators cannot allow African-American male students to be disproportionately targeted as "underachievers." By facilitating this proposed study of the single-gender classroom practice, educators will become one step closer to gentrifying our AA males from the status quo to being academically successful.

Summary

All in all, AA male students are just as important as any other student and if educators want to improve the economy, they must successfully prepare AA male students for the real world. AA males are noteworthy for being vulnerable in the U.S. educational system and AA males have the tendency to be suspended from school due to bad behavior (Scott et al., 2014). Research also shows that AA males are vastly

underrepresented to matriculate beyond postsecondary school and are known to rank at the bottom on indicators of academic performance in most subjects (Scott et al., 2014).

Most importantly, when AA males are suspended from school, it could potentially lead to unfortunate events that take place such as imprisonment, probation, or death. In the United States, AA males are overrepresented in the prison population than any other racial group and more combined (Scott et al., 2014). Therefore, the educational system has to equip itself with the necessary tools to combat overrepresentation in prison and underrepresentation in academic achievement for AA males. All in all, the single-gender classroom will not only provide AA males with a quality education, it will essentially be utilized as a preventive measure in avoiding unfortunate events from occurring in the near future in AA males' lives.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ferrara (2005) stated that single-gender classrooms were once at the forefront in the United States in seeking solutions to improving student achievement in our nations' schools. It is very clear that males and females learn differently in the classroom based on how the two genders retain information, how they communicate their ideas, and their dispositions in the classroom. Teachers, parents, and students themselves have different perceptions about gender differences and cognitive processes; males generally excel in mathematics and physical sciences and females are known to achieve in English and social sciences (Ferrara, 2005). Brain research illuminates that males are developmentally two years behind females in the subjects of reading and writing when entering the first days of school (Ferrara, 2005). These research findings are very critical to consider when discussing the learning process of males, particularly AA male students.

A study was conducted from 1999 to 2002 to focus on the differences in academic performance of eighth graders in mixed classrooms versus single-gender classrooms. A Reno school district attempted many academic interventions to improve state assessment scores however; implementing single-gender classrooms seemed to be an approach the district was willing to take. The school district allowed the parents to place their child in

a single or mixed-gender classroom. During the first year of data collection, AA male students in single-gender classrooms improved their attendance and their behavior in the classroom. According to the teacher surveys, most teachers felt that it was more daunting to tame an all-male classroom and could not give boys long extended tasks. AA males are known to be kinesthetic learners who enjoy assignments that are “quick-paced” and thrive off of participating in activities that are objective and fact-oriented in order to summarize a concept or prior learning (Ferrara, 2005).

According to Ibanez (2011), an epidemic of single-gender educational practices have emerged that contributes to low-income and minority students academic achievement. Ibanez stated that 506 public schools adopted a single-gender approach in a co-educational building; this allowed boys and girls to co-exist socially but attended classes separately. Although single-gender based studies have occurred mostly in private and parochial schools, it could warrant an overgeneralized and biased perspective on single-gender educational practices. During the 2011-2012 school year in the Austin Independent School District, more public schools started to emerge with single-gender based approaches. Within these schools, effective boy-friendly gender-based instructional strategies should be implemented by well-trained teachers who are able to meet the needs of the students. Ibanez stressed that instructional delivery should be exclusively intended to create a boy-friendly environment while teaching the core curriculum as well.

In addition, an anthropological ethnography study was conducted on low-income and minority students in California who participate in experimental public choice single-

gender institutions. Hubbard and Datnow (2005) made it crystal clear that the mere separation of gender in a school is just the tip of the iceberg as it relates to academic achievement. In order to fully perpetuate academic achievement for low-income and minority students, the authors considered three other factors such as student-teacher relationships, the role of resources, and how the gender roles are organized in the school. All of these factors complement each other and contribute to the single-gender educational experience.

Theoretical and empirical research has shown that teacher expectations of AA males are much lower than middle to upper-class students which puts them at a disadvantage; on the other hand, AA female students are expected to achieve more than their counterparts (Hubbard & Datnow, 2005). Although researchers have mixed feelings and have the findings are controversial, AA male students are known to benefit from single gender classrooms. Hubbard and Datnow duly noted that AA male students are generally expected to “chronically” fail in co-educational settings; research has shown that single-gender education has yielded positive benefits most of the time for AA male students.

The premise of single-gender schools for AA males does not have a well-articulated theory for academic intervention therefore it can be characterized by a theoretical framework to distinguish the need for improving the quality of education (Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, 2010). Common theories surrounding these strategies are: identified as understanding the social/emotional needs and knowing the academic needs of AA male students. Practitioners of single-gender schools revealed

three prevailing social/emotional approaches such as (a) redefining the idea of masculinity, (b) discover an academic identity, and (c) develop their future and leadership qualities (Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, 2010). Without being able to master these concepts, AA males will encounter extreme structural social-related such as institutional racism, imprisonment and even issues with securing careers (Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, 2010). When discussing the totality of the how AA males identify with what they see is astonishing; it also diminishes their perceptions of themselves and other AA males.

In 2017, the current culture of media forces are prevalent and the severe impact AA males are faced with challenge them daily such as negative depictions of AA men on social media, television and radio which leads to unattractive behavior in the classroom. The objective of practitioners is to shift the importance of the deconstruction of the AA male identity towards the significance of school in efforts to build morale and establish “brotherhood” among their classmates (Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, 2010). Most importantly, single-gender schools’ mission is to prepare AA male students to become working professionals once they graduate from college. Also, another key initiative is to transform AA males into the leaders of tomorrow by delegating tasks or encouraging them to hold a leadership position in a student-led organization.

Historically, the black-white achievement gap data in the United States has posed a major problem in the realm of American education. The U.S. Department of Education (2009) reiterated that prior research shows that education and income status has a direct correlation; AA students who resided in low-income neighborhoods struggled

academically in the classroom. The U.S. Department of Education published an executive summary of the mathematics and reading assessment long-term data for fourth and eighth graders according to gender and ethnicity in the United States in 1990 and 2007; mathematics assessment data were evaluated in 1990 and reading assessment data was evaluated in 1992.

The average mathematics scores of fourth and eighth graders were higher in 2007 than they were in 1990; however, the black-white achievement gap did not change; scores were documented to have increased between 2005 and 2007. The average reading scores of fourth and eighth grade AA males were higher in 2007 than they were in 1992 and the achievement gap narrowed for fourth graders; yet the scores increased for eighth graders, the achievement gap showed no significant changes in 2007. The achievement gap data indicated that the long term achievement gap trends between AA male and their counterparts have made slight progress but not enough to contribute to sufficient need for closing the gap. The National Assessment of Educational Progress looks at this data as a means to compare assessment data nationally and how to properly fix the achievement gap issue appropriately in the future.

Lynn et al. (2010) conducted an ethnographic study from a critical race theoretical approach to discover the possible implications for teacher impact on student achievement and teacher beliefs' about AA male students in troubled schools. The study took place from 2003 to 2005 in a low-income neighborhood at a low-performing high school in a black suburban county in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The study focused on the perceptions of teachers, students, administration, and stakeholders (parents,

community) on why AA male students who fall in the “minority achievement gap”—this includes why they tend to underperform in standardized assessments, have higher rate of suspension and expulsion, are overrepresented in special education and are among the highest percentage of high-school dropouts.

Researchers conducted teacher interviews involving a series of focus groups and 18 months of classroom observations in the school. Lynn et al. (2010) found that school personnel placed blame on their students and the lack of parental involvement, and absence of community engagement for stigmatizing AA male students as underachievers. Researchers discovered that teachers strongly believed that AA male students were strategically placed in an environment that was not safe, conducive to their learning, and the students were raised in a “hopeless and defeated” culture (Lynn et al., 2010). This piece of literature further explains how many environmental factors can truly determine the “expected or unexpected” outcomes of AA male students. The literature sheds light on the need for innovative gender-specific instructional styles to deeply impact AA male student achievement in public education.

Negative multimedia depictions such as social media, television, and radio can have an influence on the expected behavior outcomes and academic achievement of AA males in the classroom which can potentially lead to alarming dropout rates. According to Child Trends (2015), dropout rates have been attributed by low attendance, low levels of engagement, minimum parental involvement, attending low-income schools, and showing signs of deviant behavior (disciplinary issues). The literature speaks to how racial differences play a crucial part in how the dropout rate continues to rise with AA

males versus their counterparts. Child Trends illustrated in “The Dropout Rates, Number and Percentage Distribution” in October 2014 that the percentages of AA male students had the highest percentages for those who dropped out of school between the ages of 16 to 24. According to the data provided, AA male students encounter gender and racial specific social issues that impede their learning process.

Consequently, AA males need alternatives to academic failure such as attending schools of their choice, attending chartered schools, college preparation programs, and single gendered modeled schools (Scott et al., 2014). Research has shown that schools who adopt one or more of these effective strategies are more likely to contribute to AA male student achievement. Scott et al. discussed the disparities that exist in the public sector against AA male students—these disparities are known as discipline policies, special education and the impact of tracking student activity. The literature illustrated how AA male students who come from disadvantaged neighborhoods have become overrepresented in suspension and expulsion rates in the public school system.

Scott et al. (2014) determined that AA male students are generally sent through the “discipline pipeline” due to their negative environmental factors; these factors cause teachers to fear AA male students which lead to writing a discipline referral. Scott et al. recommended that schools should implement positive behavior intervention systems (PBIS) as a means to curb the negative behavior and encourage positive behavior. When AA male students are seen as being a threat in the classroom, ultimately a recommendation was made to have them identified as special education students. According to the Center for Educational Statistics, AA students make up at least 11% of

the special education population—in fact, teachers tend to identify AA males as mentally retarded or emotionally disturbed due to their discipline record (Scott et al., 2014).

Fortunately, many alternatives to “academic failure” or “discipline sanctions” have been rendered for AA male students such as single-gender learning environments. In 2006, the U.S. Department of Education mandated provisions for establishing single-gender schools under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in an effort to salvage AA male students’ low achievement (Scott et al., 2014).

When AA male students are emerged in the single-gender environment, a deeper understanding and appreciation for learning takes place because gender differences are disregarded. Scott et al. (2014) discovered that single-gender environments perpetuate positive behavioral and academic interactions, a decrease in distractions, and little to no discipline problems existed in the classroom. The literature is robust and full of knowledge regarding the problem and solutions for the AA male achievement gap in public schools. The literature fosters rich and empirical research-based solutions that can potentially end the chronic failure rates of AA male students; the literature provides data that has been facilitated by prior researchers and discusses future recommendations for future studies.

Single-gender schools pride themselves on knowing and aiming to meet students where they are. Therefore, in addition to articulating the social and emotional needs of AA males, single-gender schools provide support for their academic needs. Principals and teachers outline four key academic needs of AA male students: (a) achievement gap closure, (b) college preparation, (c) raising academic expectations, and (d) providing a

curriculum that is rigorous and relevant (Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, 2010). Gaps in academic skills could include exceptional students who have a difficult time with literacy, math, and critical thinking skills. By providing a rigorous curriculum for AA male students, those weaknesses can be strengthened (Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, 2010). Single-gender schools must provide access and expose AA males to college expectations such as quality instruction, establish a stable environment and college information for those who have limited access (Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, 2010).

College preparedness is most critical for those who are identified as “first generation” college students. Single-gender schools also set high academic expectations in order to improve work ethic and give students the opportunity to compete with their counterparts (Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, 2010). Fortunately, with the evolving generation of students who enter into public schools have to be sensationalized which means the curriculum must be relevant. Relevant instruction will engage AA males and assist them with making connections to their own real life experiences.

Fletcher (2013) supported the notion that AA male students are identified as underachievers in academics, overrepresented in school suspension rates and encounter social pressures of the world. Fletcher conducted a qualitative study on AA male high school students who participated in single-gender programs. The findings elicited that the overall experience was positive and beneficial for exposing them to college information, role models were present in the classroom and a culture was created which made it easier for them to build close relationships with their classmates. Cultural

relevance was also among one of the advantages that the participants valued in their single-gender classrooms (Fletcher, 2013). AA males were drawn towards the leadership of women teachers in the classroom as well; 24 out of the 38 participants contested that a female teacher contributed to their development into a man.

Overall, it would appear that teacher connectedness and relationships heavily contributed to their experience in a single-gender classroom. Lastly, the qualitative study revealed that single-gender classrooms dramatically decreased student discipline issues and suspension rates (Fletcher, 2013). Single-gender programs key initiative is to bridge the cultural gap between students and teachers in urban schools which points to the notion that teacher-student relationships are vital to AA male academic achievement (Fletcher, 2013).

Furthermore, the ETS Policy Information Center (2012) shed light on holding a promise for AA males to attend single-sex programs which promote community collaboration and encourage culture of academic achievement. Austin, TX has opened three single-gender schools, two of which that cater to low-income AA male students to relieve academic stressors that AA males encounter on a day-to-day basis. AA male students will have free summer school and after school enrichments programs that is designed to target low-income and minority children. The article further explained that single-gender schools seek to focus their attention on alleviating “the distraction” of impressing the opposite sex in the classroom (ETS Policy Information Center, 2012). With the emergence of single-gender schools, the premise of cultivating a collaborative spirit between the school, family and the community. The article stated that inspiration

alone will motivate AA male students to perform academically better if AA males are inspired to come to school, if learning is fun and interesting (academic rigor), and able to build a strong relationship with teachers (ETS Policy Information Center, 2012).

Finally, recent studies from the 2025 Campaign for Black Men and Boys report that AA males have historically struggled due to: (a) attending under resourced schools and low performing schools, (b) they are more likely to be suspended or expelled due to misconduct, (c) they constitute for the majority of special education, (d) they are taught in schools that lack certified teachers, and (e) their graduation rates from college are among the lowest. Although these statistics have been proven to be startling, the National Education Association [NEA] (2011) stated that school leaders can positively impact AA male achievement with the right leadership and providing a culturally responsive curriculum. NEA discussed how a principal from a low performing Newark Tech High School with a significant AA male population drastically turned around the school and improved the graduation rate. New Jersey's school district mandated an initiative to provide increased education hours for students, continuous professional development for teachers, upgraded facilities and supplemental educational resources for impoverished students (NEA, 2011).

Principal Baruti Kafele explained that AA males experience social deterring issues such as low self-esteem, lack of self-discipline, and self-respect, all of which cannot be remedied from an academic approach (NEA, 2011). Kafele believes three components have to present in order to meet the social needs of the students: strong leadership, male empowerment, school-community connectedness, and providing a

culturally responsive curriculum. By implementing these components in Newark Tech High School, the AA male population graduated at 100% and the student body tested at 100% proficiency in reading and math. This article shed light that educators must seek to address social issues through a social lens instead of an academic one, especially for AA male students. The culture of the school, the curriculum, and the response to intervention have to be tailored to the population you serve a low-income neighborhood.

In summary, AA male students are looked upon as underprivileged individuals who typically come from low-income, disadvantaged neighborhoods. AA male students are plagued with negative media constructs, they lack parental involvement/engagement, they lack inspiration and have been stigmatized as “chronic underachievers.” AA male students require special attention from key constituents to decrease the failure rate of AA male students. The only way to resolve this problem is to provide meaningful and purposeful solutions. According to the data, the black-white achievement gap has been inconsistently widened and narrowed for at least two decades; however, it is not too late for teachers, instructional leaders, and stakeholders (parents and community) to collaborate in an effort to the chronic failure of AA male achievement. Where do we go from here? Creating and implementing effective gender-specific and differentiated instructional strategies with fidelity will ultimately become the remedy to the academic illness of AA male students.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research Design

The data were conceptualized through conducting in-depth interviews to gain insight on the dispositions on single-gender education and prolonged observations of four focus groups in a single-gender male environment. A descriptive case study approach was utilized to conduct the study appropriately. The researcher carefully examined the dispositions of teachers and instructional leaders by conducting interviews (qualitative), parents and students completed a snapshot survey along with a document analysis of bundled middle grades' Georgia Milestone scores in the CCRPI report were considered as well (quantitative). A descriptive approach benefited the intended research to explore gender-specific instructional strategies and the expected outcomes of AA male students. Various instruments such as teacher/administrator interviews, student surveys, gender-specific TKES/LKES evaluations, along with Georgia milestone and teacher-made assessments in reading and mathematics, were utilized to determine the findings of this research.

Definition of Variables

A dependent variable is a variable denoted by (y) that depends or can be directly affected by another variable. An independent variable is a variable denoted by (x) that

remains constant and affects the dependent variable. The beginning of the methods section identified the dependent variable and independent variables considered in this mixed method study.

Dependent Variable

Academic Achievement is defined as student growth or mastery of AA male students in reading and mathematics classes. Data were analyzed from the College Career Readiness Program Index Report (i.e., student attendance, student discipline data, Georgia milestone scores, demographics, local and regional academic standings, school climate, and student mobility rate).

Independent Variables

Rigor and Relevance of Curriculum is defined as the teacher and instructional leaders' perceptions of academic expectations that are set for AA male students and instructional delivery should be correlated to "real-world" situations.

Student Management is defined as the process of managing students in the classroom during instructional time without disruptive behaviors.

Student Engagement is defined as the attentiveness, awareness, interest, optimism and passion that students demonstrate during instructional time.

Professional Learning Communities are educators who meet regularly as a group to exchange instructional strategies and assist each other with improving teaching and learning.

School Culture is defined as “the way things are done in the classroom or in the school” which includes classroom procedures and defined norms for a single-gender school.

Subject Matter is defined as the core content area that AA males are evaluated on to be promoted to the next grade level which is known as the Georgia Milestone Assessment. The prescribed state mandated content areas examined in this study are reading and mathematics.

Expected Outcomes of Single-Gender Education: The dispositions that single-gender teachers have of their students, the academic and behavior expectations they set for students, and the classroom culture that is established.

Gender of Teacher is defined as the “maternal and paternal” role that fits the need of student who is missing that relationship in the home (i.e. AA male without father figure would connect better with male teacher and AA male without mother figure would connect better with female teacher).

Gender-Specific Learning Styles are defined as the learning styles that impact AA male student behavior in a single-gender classroom.

Theoretical Framework

Three theories were used to drive this mixed-method study in efforts to fully explore how theory and practice complement each other: critical race theory, expectancy theory, and hierarchy of needs. Theoretically, these theories were the most fitting frameworks to investigate the notion of how AA male students continue to be marginalized because of the color of their skin or the content of their behavior. The

theoretical framework sought to explain how race can affect the way certain people are treated when they interact with other people. Derrick Bell developed the critical race theory (CRT) which seeks to study and transform the relationship among race, power, and racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). CRT stresses the notion that the foundation for liberal order is weakened because racism coexists with oppression that is inflicted upon minority and low-income groups.

CRT works with several themes that highlight how “racial bias” still exists in the United States today, which creates institutional or structural racism for “underprivileged” people (minority groups). CRT was directly related to the declining student learning outcomes of AA male students in urban school districts. Some critical race theorists believe that the future direction of the theory can lead to an interest of “white privilege” in the classroom. This notion explained and directly supported how AA males, along with other minority groups, continue to be academically victimized in the classroom due to origins of their race.

Next, Vroom’s expectancy theory cast a bright light on how critical motivation and expected outcomes are when it comes to being academically successful in the classroom. Clearly (2014) discussed how significant Vroom’s expectancy theory of Motivation is directly correlated to student self-efficacy and high academic achievement. Vroom’s expectancy theory states that motivation is the intended outcome of an individual’s perceived output, their level of performance and how that performance is going to lead them to the outcome (Clearly, 2014). Academically, if a student perceives an outcome to be satisfying (i.e. good grade on exam or receiving high recognition), then

the student will be motivated to attain that goal. Motivation is how a student perceives their ability to perform in the classroom and their perceived instrument they use which leads them to that outcome.

For a student to be highly motivated, they must believe in themselves, their level of performance and the instrument they use in the classroom to lead them to an expected outcome. Students who acquire academic self-efficacy develop the ability to believe that they can succeed in their endeavors. For example, students who have high emotional intelligence (high motivation) tend to perform better in the classroom than those who have low emotional intelligence (low self-esteem). Belief is a strong indicator for a student's academic success especially in low-performing schools. How does this correlate to the expected outcomes of AA male students who come from low-income neighborhoods?

AA male students are generally the product of their environment and that comes along with lack of parental involvement and low self-efficacy. This is a trend that affects the expected outcomes that teachers and instructional leaders set forth for the AA male population. If the motivation is not embedded in AA male students, then the effort to put forth is going to be non-existent which eventually leads to resistance such as exhibiting bad behavior in the classroom. Bad behavior leads to an unfortunate series of events which predetermines the outcome for AA male students (in-school suspension [ISS], academic probation, special education, etc.). Fortunately, the cycle can be broken when effective interventions are implemented. Clearly (2014) suggested that one major intervention is increasing a student's self-efficacy in and out of the classroom—self-

efficacy is a strong indicator of their academic achievement. Instructional leaders and teachers should be strategic to include motivation interventions for students during the school year as it is a determinant of expected or unexpected outcomes for AA male students.

Most importantly, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs states that humans desire to attain goals but in order to attain those goals, certain needs have to be met sequentially; if the most basic needs are not met, then other levels of attainment will not be met (Burleson & Thoron, 2014). Maslow categorized the human needs in a pyramid—(a) physiological needs are the foundation (shelter, water, food, clothing, etc.); (b) safety and security (health, family, property, employment); (c) love and belonging (friendship, family, intimacy), (d) self-esteem (confidence, achievement and respect of others), and (e) self-actualization (morale, creativity, acceptance, etc.). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory is directly correlated to the learning process in the classroom; for instance, if a learner comes to school without having breakfast, then all other needs are not going to be satisfied i.e. that student will not be focused and may cause disruptions. According to Maslow, a learners' first responsibility is satisfying their physiological needs before anything else can take place.

Burleson and Thoron (2014) stated that teachers deal with students who are deprived of physiological needs, safety, love, and self-esteem. This theoretical approach is applicable to all students in the classroom, especially AA male students. This theory continues to be a staple in educational practice when it comes to observing academic achievement. Although it is unrealistic to provide all of the physiological needs for all

learners, school districts provide free and reduced lunch, clothes, and shelter throughout the day to address meeting those physiological needs. AA male students who come from impoverished neighborhoods sometimes struggle to meet their physiological needs on a day-to-day basis.

Subsequently, AA male students who attend low-performing schools are generally located in metropolitan areas where high crime rates exist; therefore, the safety and security need is not being met. If there is little to no parental involvement at home then the love and self-esteem need has to be fulfilled by the teachers; again another speed bump towards to road to self-actualization. Eventually, the cycle of needs that aren't being met continues to snowball which lead to unforeseen circumstances for AA male students. Based on this model, AA male student underachievement is caused by the absence of physiological needs and a shortage of academic motivation which impedes the learning process in the classroom.

Relationship among the Variables

Figure 1 shows the relationship of the independent and dependent variables in this study.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the study can be detrimental to yielding the results because it could skew the expected outcomes of the data. Limitations and challenges are one of the inevitabilities of conducting research in a school district; oftentimes limitations can be expected and other times they happen unexpectedly.

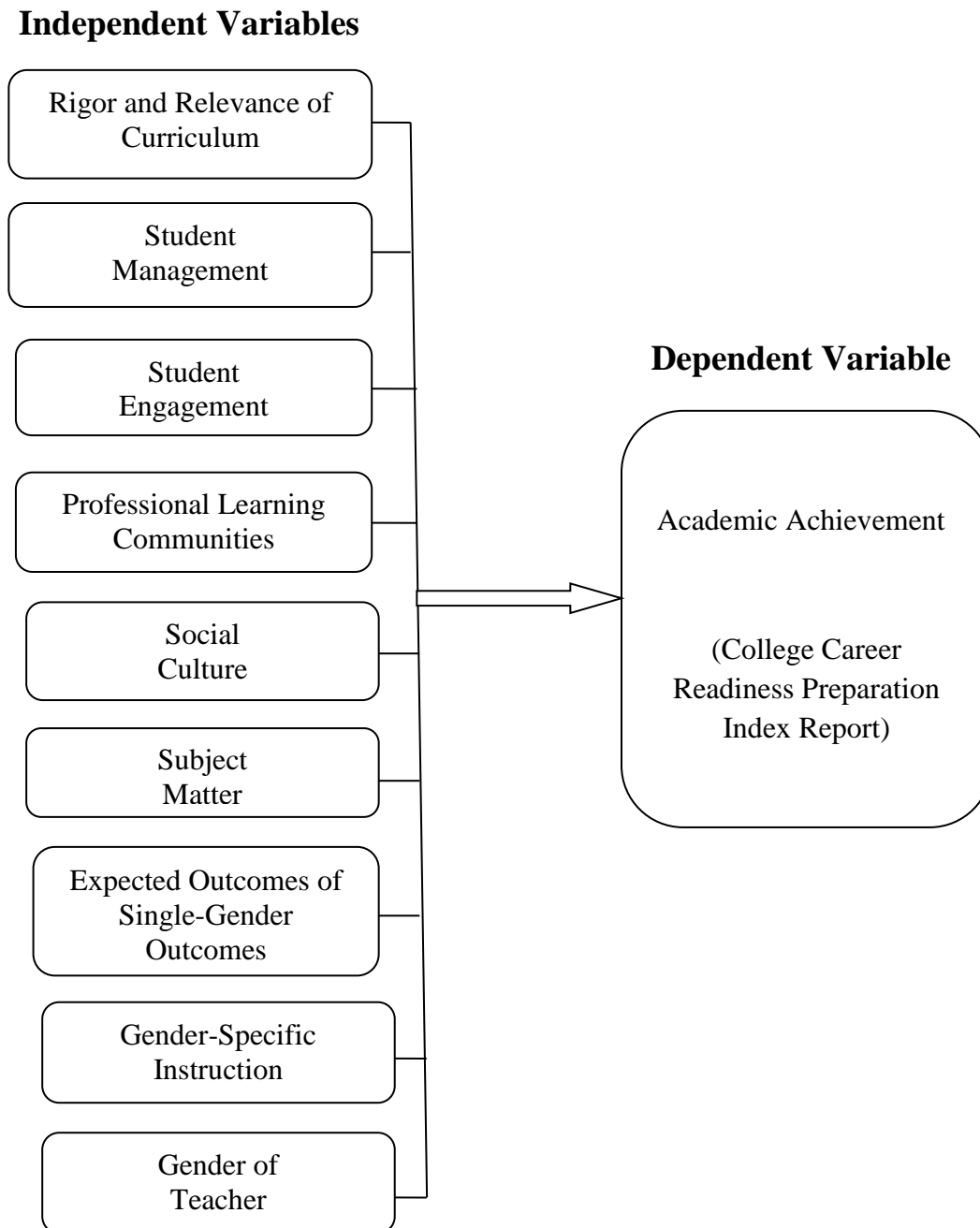


Figure 1. Relationship among the variables.

Note: All variables were intended to either have a positive or negative relationship with academic achievement however, yet to be determined until the research methodology is executed properly. The findings of the research will draw final conclusions on the relationship of variables; the research analysis discusses the interpretation and meaning of the relationship of variables.

Possible limitations that could potentially hinder valid and reliable data from being collected in the exploration of the study could include the following:

- time constraints impacted by teacher schedules and school events could impact research data;
- the mobility of student population impacted the student participation rate;
- observation findings may only be unique to the targeted population and cannot be generalized;
- time of day observations conducted may become a limitation since behavior fluctuates before and after lunch period.

Summary

Theory and practice are two concepts that complement each other in the classroom; however, theory only guides practice but it cannot determine the expected outcomes. The critical race theory, the expectancy theory, and the hierarchy of needs form a tiered conceptual framework for the proposed mixed-method study. Although theory and practice complement each other, oftentimes theory does not determine the series of events that take place in the classroom. By conducting this research and keeping limitations in consideration, the research team intends on establishing a direct correlation between all independent and dependent variables to yield meaningful and purposeful results.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Rationale of the Study

The achievement gap heavily exists in the low-income and minority student population, yet AA male students are overrepresented to be among the lowest performing students in the nation. AA male students are a rare breed because they continuously face adversity in academic achievement, cultural stereotypes, and social disadvantages in education. AA males have also incurred disproportionate suspension and expulsion rates in school which means the academic issue is coupled with a disciplinary issue as well (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). Research shows that disciplinary action has been known to contribute to the alarming rates of underachievement for AA male students in urban school education. Other factors that potentially contribute to the academic strongholds of AA males are lack of parental support, limited resources, poverty, strained student-teacher relationships, and underrepresentation in extracurricular activities (Gregory et al., 2010).

The descriptive case study further provided solutions for bandaging the academic and social scar that AA male students wear for being marginalizing in urban school education. The case study explored how single-gender schools can target AA male learning outcomes, create strong social bonds with teachers and peers, promote great work ethic, push them into leadership positions and deconstruct the status quo of their

population. It is extremely important to focus on aiding AA male students so they can become the future leaders and working professionals in the United States. More importantly, this study sought to gain a deeper understanding about the achievement gap epidemic and how to prevent it from spreading to future generations to come.

Research Design

A descriptive case study approach was used as a prolonged observational design of a focus group which guided the study qualitatively and quantitatively. This type of research approach allowed the researcher to document copious notes on the focus group, study the patterns of the behavior, and be able to enumerate the dispositions of students and parents. Unobtrusive measures were taken when observing the behavior and social interactions of AA male students with their peers and their teachers; this could possibly eliminate skewed observation data (University of Southern California, 2017).

From a qualitative approach, teacher and instructional leaders were interviewed by the researcher to gather in-depth responses on their dispositions on the effectiveness of gender-specific instructional strategies and how their instructional strategies affect the learning outcomes of AA male students. Instructional leaders, reading teachers, and mathematics teachers participated in two individual interviews—one held at the beginning and at the end of the study. Questions addressed the effectiveness of gender-specific instruction, school culture, motivation interventions, disciplinary issues and action, assessment data, and future recommendations for single-gender instruction. The researcher created an interview schedule for all participants; interviews were conducted during planning periods, before or after school.

From a quantitative approach, the researcher administered parent and student snapshot surveys in order to quantify their dispositions and attitudes. The surveys were administered and monitored online for convenience purposes; the survey gained quantifiable results in regards to dispositions, challenges and recommendations for single-gender instruction. The researcher utilized Survey Monkey as the online survey instrument for the study. Also, the Georgia Milestone Assessment scores were carefully examined in the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) report through the document analysis form.

The researcher closely observed the focus group in a single gender school in a primarily low-income neighborhood in Fulton County. The researcher, who acted as a student teacher in the classroom, remained as unobtrusive as possible. The researcher intentionally observed the focus group and documented notes on the observation instrument. The focus group was observed over a period of three days before and after lunch; the researcher documented copious field notes such as student behavior, classroom culture, student-teacher interactions, and implementation of instruction.

Description of the Setting

The research site for the study took place in an urban school district in the metro-Atlanta area that served a saturated African-American male population of about 400 students in grades 6 to 12 (middle school grades were the focal point). The public charter school was a close-knit, high-performing, tuition-free middle and upper school campus that offers a research-driven Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) program. The school had a smaller than average teacher to student ratio that

focuses on developing mentor relationships with the student population.

Demographically, African Americans make up 99% of the population and 1% are Hispanic; 60% of the student population receives free and reduced lunch, and 15% are identified as Students with Disabilities (SWD). The public charter school thrives off of building leaders and molding global citizens who are active in the community, take classes in the arts, participate in championship-level athletics, and embraces international travel.

Sampling Procedures

The ETS Policy Information Center (2010) claims there is a state of emergency for AA male students because they have been identified as an “at-risk” population. AA males are more likely to grow up in poverty, attend urban schools, and drop out of school before their high school graduation. AA males struggle with physical, emotional and social transitions during the ages of 9 to 13 years old, which tend to pose a great risk for academic and social vulnerability (ETS Policy Information Center, 2010). AA males also are punished much harsher than their white and even Latino counterparts which means they are disproportionately targeted for misbehavior and is absent from school due to school sanctions. AA male students between the ages of 10 and 14 are identified as the target population for this study because they are “at risk” underachievers who primarily come from impoverished communities; therefore, they were the focal point in this study.

The descriptive case study focused on 58 AA male students who attended a single-gender school in a low-income neighborhood between the ages of 12 and 14. The researcher conveniently selected 4 classrooms (two reading and two math) in the school

to observe. The researcher utilized a random convenience sample because students who attend this school were considered the “targeted” population. All designated teachers were interviewed throughout the study to progress monitor their dispositions on instruction and achievement data. An instructional leader was interviewed on their perceptions of students and teachers in the classroom and their dispositions on the instructional strategies they implement in their school. The researcher observed the focus groups while paying close attention to gender-specific instructional strategies, student behavior and class climate.

Working with Human Subjects

The researcher furnished confidentiality agreements with all research instrumentation for participants to sign stating their identities would be completely anonymous. Human subjects’ identities were not revealed on printed documents and had to voluntarily agree to participate in the study. All letters and confidentiality forms were kept on file after administrative, University, and IRB approval took place. Afterwards, a completed IRB application was submitted by the primary researcher to gain approval to start collecting data for the proposed study. Once approval was granted by the IRB and the school district, the research process took place.

Instrumentation

Data collection instruments included a teacher/instructional leader interview protocol, observation field notes, student/parent survey protocol and document analysis. The research design instruments were utilized by a qualified qualitative research facilitator who has the ability to yield the best results after gathering the data. The surveys and interviews were constructed in a way to show a relationship, if any, among the independent variables and the dependent variable; emerging themes were documented as well. The aim of the study was that each instrument would aid in answering the designated research questions of the study from a mixed-method approach. All instruments were originally created by the primary researcher and approved by the IRB before field observations take place. The Table 1 presents all of the research instruments and shows how the data were collected in an effort to analyze all independent variables and the dependent variable in the study.

Table 1

Research Data Collection Methods

Research Instruments	Data Collection Method
Observation Document Form	Researcher conducted classroom observations
Student Survey	Survey Monkey or Hard Copy
Parent Survey	Survey Monkey or Hard Copy
Faculty Interview Protocol	Researcher is facilitating interviews for teachers and administration.
Document Analysis Summary Form	Researcher analyzed grouped middle grades GA Milestone scores, student demographics, students attendance/participation records, (i.e. CCRPI Report)

Data Collection Procedures

Observation Field Notes Protocol

Data were collected to focus on academic achievement from a cumulative standpoint so that growth can be measured throughout the study. The research and data collection took place at the school site and directly included all participants in the study. Depending on time schedules of the researcher, the focus group was observed twice a day in order to gather results in a timely fashion. The focus group was observed before and after lunch to capture differences in AA male temperament in the classrooms. Classroom observations took place for approximately 20 minutes before and after lunch; the primary researcher anticipated a fluctuation in behavior. Observation field notes documented classroom demographics, AA male behavior, the use of instructional time, social interactions, disciplinary infractions, and student-teacher rapport and teacher influence.

Student/Parent Survey Protocol

Student and parent surveys were conducted at the beginning and the end of the study. The survey prompted student participants to provide their (a) age, (b) grade, and (c) course of study (i.e. reading or math). Letters were sent out at least a week in advance via the school to notify parents of the surveys; parental consent was given for students to participate in completing research-based surveys. The survey provided 10 statements guided by the research selected variables; the participants had to provide a response on a continuum (i.e., strongly agree, agree, neither, disagree, and strongly disagree). The questions on the student surveys prompted students to share their disposition of single-gender education, their academic motivation, learning styles, their relationship with their

teachers, and their morale in the classroom. Surveys were readily available for students primarily online via Survey Monkey or hard copy. These online survey instruments were collected and analyzed by the primary researcher. All surveys remained completely anonymous to ensure that responses were accurate and remained confidential.

The researcher sought input from parents by conducting a survey at the beginning and the end of the study to monitor their perceptions of their child's academic achievement, disposition of single-gender education, and the impact of the school. Each survey prompted parents to provide demographic data such as (a) age, (b) gender, (c) marital status, (d) occupation, (e) socioeconomic status, and (f) level of education. The survey provided 10 statements guided by direct correlated variables and students responded on a continuum (i.e. strongly agree, agree, neither, disagree, and strongly disagree). The questions addressed parents' dispositions on single-gender education, home learning strategies, their engagement/involvement in their child's education, and their perceptions of their child's academic motivation.

Teacher Interview Protocol

Teacher interviews were administered by the primary researcher; the interviews were structured to allow teachers to give in-depth insights on how they incorporate instructional strategies to meet AA male student needs in the classroom. Interviews were conducted in person before school, during planning, or after school; phone interviews were conducted if time did not permit during the work day. Audio aids such as tape recorders or phone audio recorders were utilized for the purpose of decoding oral responses and providing accurate feedback from the participants. All participants

scheduled their interviews based on convenience between August and September.

Interviews consisted of 10 open-ended questions for teachers and parents that were geared towards their perceptions on AA male academic performance and discipline issues that may have incurred during the class period.

Document Analysis

Documents were analyzed to measure student test score data, discipline records, the effectiveness of professional development courses, school improvement plans, and teacher and leader evaluations (TKES/LKES). The documents measured all research variables in an effort to explore and discover the correlation between the independent and dependent variables outlined in the study. A document summary form disclosed the title of the document, the date reviewed, key constituents who created the document, the significance of the document and emerging themes throughout the document. A document summary form was utilized for the entire document analysis process to analyze the importance and significance of each document. The primary researcher gathered, filled out, and analyzed the document summary throughout the research process. This aided in discovering emerging themes, correlating variables and exploring the raw data of the school.

Summary

The research design of this study followed a strict and shared timeline to ensure that all participants were conveniently selected, participants would remain anonymous, data were collected effectively, and all variables measured appropriately. The exploration of the underachievement of AA male students called for an observational

prolonged study in efforts to fully investigate and discover emerging themes in the single-gender setting. Research variables were carefully examined and emerging themes were taken into consideration when data were collected by the research team. After data collection was completed, the data were analyzed to discuss findings of the study, share implications, draw meaningful conclusions, limitations of the study, and make future recommendations.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

This research was driven by a mixed-method study to explore the pedagogy of stimulating academic achievement outcomes of AA male students in single-gender classrooms. This study was implemented with the goal of emphasizing how single-gender classroom instruction truly impacts AA male student achievement, the teacher's ability to make the curriculum relevant, and motivate them to be academically successful. According to Singh, Vaught, and Mitchell (1998), AA male students have been disproportionately identified as students with disabilities (SWD), have been less motivated, and less likely to succeed and perform well in school. In recent years, schools have been intentional and purposeful in developing strategies that are gender and culturally specific for AA male students.

Therefore, schools have created efforts to improve academic achievement by providing mentoring programs, tutoring services, counseling sessions, and enrichment programs to enhance academic achievement and encourage motivation among the target population (Singh et al., 1998). Therefore, the objective of this mixed-method study was to gauge student and parent perception, analyze critical test scores and carefully observe the school/class climate of a single-gender school that caters to AA male students.

Quantitatively, the study focused on the dispositions of the students and the parents via surveys along with analysis of the CCRPI report and qualitatively, the study provided in-depth interviews with teachers who serve the AA male population and a classroom observation of two seventh and eighth grade ELA and math classrooms.

Quantitative Data

From a quantitative approach, the data were collected from a sample of 58 AA male students in seventh and eighth grades. Students were conveniently selected and received instruction in four distinct classroom environments in ELA and math. All student surveys were collected during instructional time either before or immediately after classroom observations. The research questions were specifically developed around the dependent variable (Academic Achievement of AA male students) and its relationship among seven independent variables (rigor and relevance of curriculum, student management, student engagement, professional learning communities, school culture, subject matter, expected outcomes of single-gender education, gender-specific instruction and gender of the teacher). All of the independent variables were addressed in the survey protocol for students and parents.

Student Survey Results

The survey was designed to measure student attitudes on single-gender education; the typical Likert scale was a 4-point ordinal scale that required students to rate the degree to which they agree or disagree with a statement. The survey data were created and analyzed through Infogram Analytics (2017), a website designed to create bar graphs and compiles a data analysis report. The survey included 10 questions to address the

independent variables and their relationship with academic achievement (independent variable). In January 2017, 58 AA male students (26 seventh graders and 32 eighth graders) in ELA and math classes submitted responses to the survey and the following results were yielded and are represented as a bar graph (see Figure 2). Seventh grade survey results are shown in Table 2.

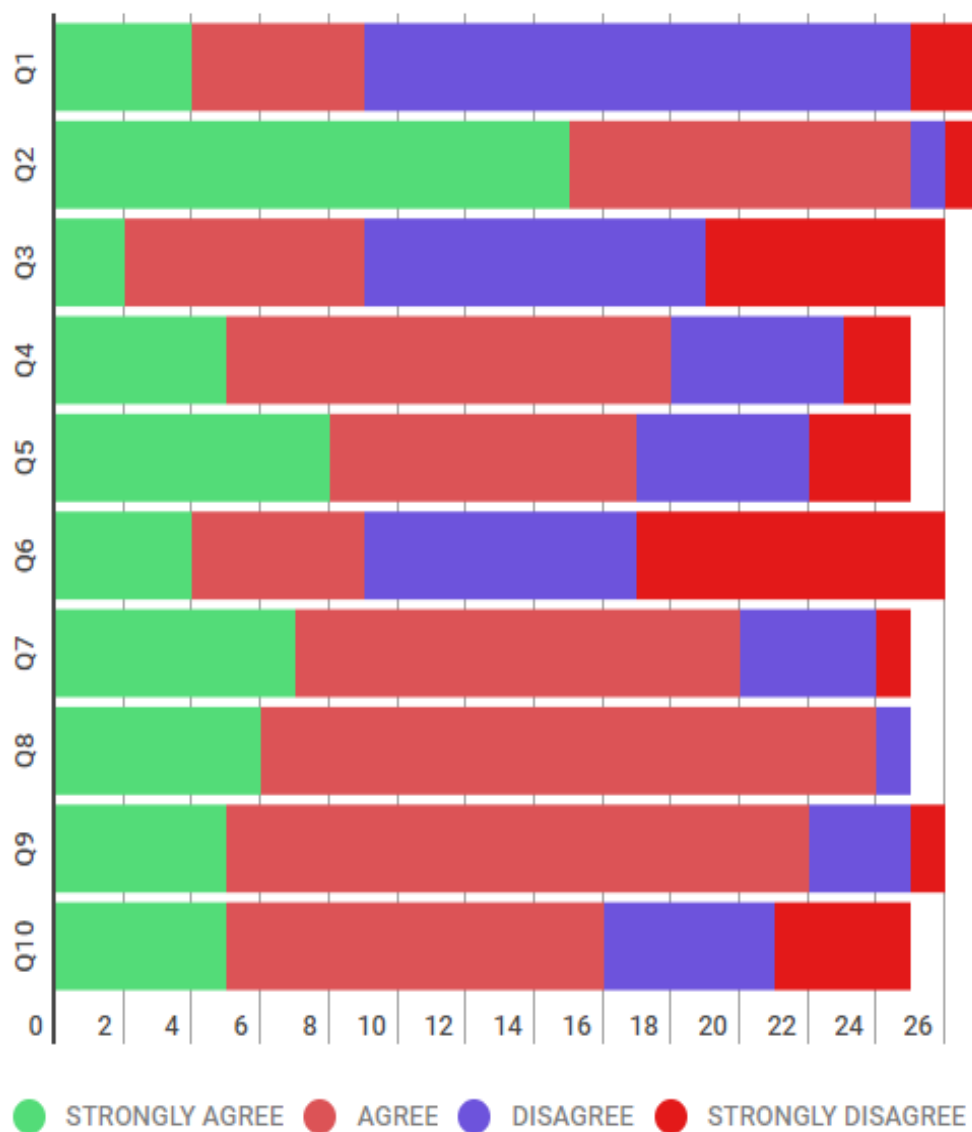


Figure 2. ELA and math classes' responses to the survey.

Table 2

Seventh Grade Survey Results

Survey Questions	Agree	Disagree
SQ1: Gender of Teacher	24%	62%
SQ2: Student Expectations	98%	2%
SQ3: Learning Disposition in Single-Gender Classroom	26%	65%
SQ4: Instructional Delivery	69%	27%
SQ5: Parent Involvement at Home	65%	30%
SQ6: Single-Gender Impact of Academic Achievement	34%	66%
SQ7: Parental Involvement at School	77%	16%
SQ8: ELA/Reading Proficiency	92%	1%
SQ9: Math Proficiency	84%	15%
SQ10: School Culture	61%	35%

***Disclaimer: percentages do not equal 100% due to respondents not answering all survey questions.

The bar graph represents the statistical data of the sample size of 26 seventh graders who rated their attitudes on single-gender education. Survey Question 1 (SQ1) addressed whether the gender of the teacher had an impact on AA male learning; 24% agreed and under 62% disagreed with the statement which means more than half of the participating sevenths graders believed that gender was not significant to their academic achievement.

SQ2 addressed if their teacher sets high expectations in the classroom; 98% agreed and 2% disagree; students believed this statement to be true; therefore, this variable significantly impacted their academic achievement.

SQ3 addressed their perception of enjoying single-gender education; 26% agreed and 65% disagreed with this statement which confirms fact the students do not enjoy attending a single-gender classrooms so it is not significant to their academic achievement.

SQ4 focused on instructional delivery being easy to gather for students; 69% agreed and 27% disagreed with the statement which means that teachers make a conscious effort to meet the needs of their classroom students, yet the teacher's instructional delivery significantly impacted their academic success.

SQ5 honed in on the parental involvement piece at home in aiding with homework; 65% agreed and 30% disagreed with this statement. The seventh graders truly believed that their parents or guardians were involved in home learning which is significant to AA male achievement.

SQ6 addressed student perception on their participation in single-gender classrooms; 34% agreed and 66% disagreed with this statement. The majority of seventh graders did not believe that single-gender education contributes to their academic achievement. Consequently, it is not significant to their academic achievement.

SQ7 focused on parental involvement and engagement at the school; 77% agreed and less than 16% disagreed with this statement. The parental involvement and engagement were significantly and directly impacted AA male academic achievement.

SQ8 addressed students who believed they are proficient in the subject of English and language arts (ELA) and reading; 92% agreed and less than 1% disagreed with this statement. This finding was highly significant and was directly correlated to academic achievement yet could be an outlier when gaining insight from the teacher's perspective.

SQ9 addressed students who believed they were proficient in the subject of math; 84% agreed and 15% disagreed with this statement. This finding was also significant and the outcome of the students' perception would directly impact AA male academic achievement.

Lastly, SQ10 addressed if the students believed their school fosters a positive culture; 61% agreed and less than 35% disagreed with this statement. More than 50% percent of the sample size believed that the established school culture had a significant to the study and was positively correlated to AA male academic achievement.

The bar graph (Figure 3) represents the statistical data of the sample size of 32 eighth graders who rated their attitudes on single-gender education. Eighth grade survey results are presented in Table 3.

SQ1 addressed if the gender of the teacher has an impact on AA male learning; 28% agreed and under 65% disagreed with the statement which meant more than half of the eighth graders believed that gender does not significantly impact the learning process.

SQ2 addressed if their teacher sets high expectations in the classroom; 88% agreed and less than 1% disagreed; students believed this statement to be true; therefore, this variable significantly impacted AA male achievement.

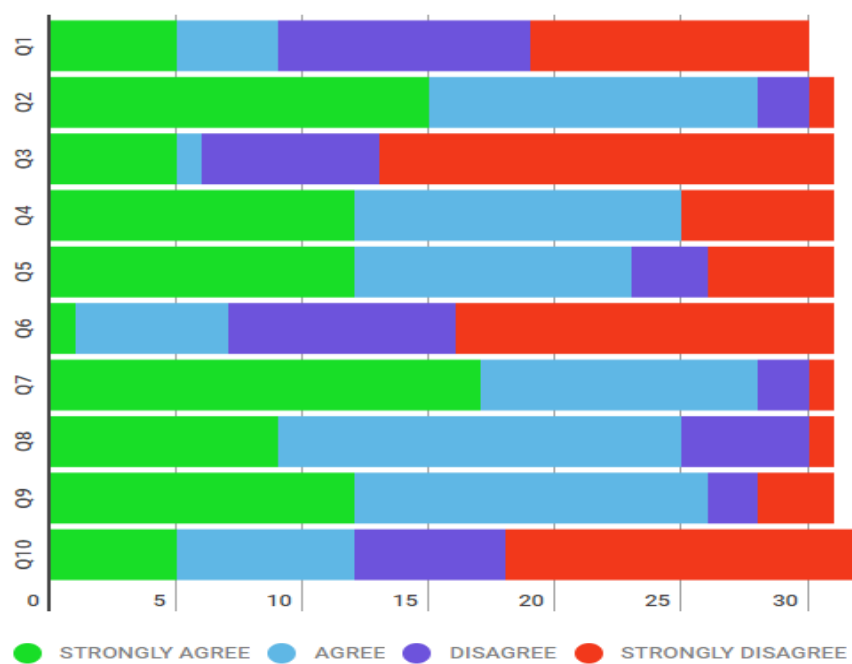


Figure 3. Eighth grade survey results.

Table 3

Eighth Grade Survey Results

Survey Questions	Agree	Disagree
SQ1: Gender of Teacher	28%	65%
SQ2: Student Expectations	88%	> 1%
SQ3: Learning Disposition in Single-Gender Classroom	19%	78%
SQ4: Instructional Delivery	78%	19%
SQ5: Parent Involvement at Home	72%	25%
SQ6: Single-Gender Impact of Academic Achievement	22%	75%
SQ7: Parental Involvement at School	88%	> 1%

Table 3 (continued)

Survey Questions	Agree	Disagree
SQ8: ELA/Reading Proficiency	78%	19%
SQ9: Math Proficiency	81%	16%
SQ10: School Culture	38%	63%

***Disclaimer: percentages do not equal 100% due to respondents not answering all of the survey questions.

SQ3 addressed their perception of enjoying single-gender education; 19% agreed and 78% disagreed with this statement which meant students do not enjoy learning in single-gender classrooms.

SQ4 focused on instructional delivery being easy to gather for students; 78% agreed and 19% disagreed with the statement which means that teachers make a conscious effort to meet the needs of the students and, therefore, significantly impacts AA male academic achievement.

SQ5 honed in on the parental involvement piece at home in aiding with homework; 72% agreed and 25% disagreed with this statement. The eighth graders believed that their parents or guardians were involved in home learning which significantly impacts AA male achievement.

SQ6 addressed student perception on their participation in single-gender classrooms; 22% agreed and 75% disagreed with this statement. The majority of eighth graders did not believe that single-gender education contributes to their academic

achievement; this variable was surprisingly insignificant to AA male academic achievement.

SQ7 focuses on parental involvement and engagement at the school; 88% agreed and less than 1% disagreed with this statement. The parental involvement and engagement significantly impacted AA male academic achievement.

SQ8 addressed students who believe they are proficient in the subject of English and Language Arts (ELA) and reading; 78% agreed and 19% disagreed with this statement. This finding was significant and was directly correlated to academic achievement.

SQ9 addressed students who believed they were proficient in the subject of math; 81% agreed and 16% disagreed with this statement. This finding was also significant and it directly impacted AA male academic achievement.

Finally, SQ10 addressed if the students believed their school fosters a positive culture; 38% agreed and less than 63% disagreed with this statement. More than 50% of the sample size believed that the school culture that had been established was not conducive to their academic achievement; therefore, it was not significant to the study and had a negative relationship to AA male academic achievement.

Qualitative Data

Classroom Observation Protocol

The chief academic officer (CAO) met with the researcher to get the classroom assignments of the focus groups. Since the school served 400 students, there were only one reading teacher and math teacher per grade level. The CAO introduced all of the

teachers to the researcher and notified them the researcher would be observing them for the study. The researcher and the teachers organized times to observe classrooms. Interviews occurred before and after lunch to gauge the differences in student behavior. Interviews lasted for 20 minutes. The observation instrument documented noticeable behaviors, types of assignments, quality of instruction, peer-to-peer and teacher-to-peer interactions, recommendations, and classroom layout was drawn. Classroom observations were utilized primarily to experience the classroom culture and document norms in single-gender classrooms.

A single-gender population of seventh and eighth grade AA male students in ELA and math classes were observed before and after lunch in an effort to carefully document noticeable behavior differences in the classroom, student engagement, peer interactions, and instructional delivery and their impact on AA male academic achievement. The researcher chose ELA and math classes to observe since these two subjects are critically tested subject areas on the Georgia Milestone Assessments (state-wide assessment). The focus groups observed had 12 to 15 students per class and was made up of students who primarily come from a low-socioeconomic status (SES). The desks were arranged in close proximity to each other to encourage group activity; seventh and eighth grade math and seventh grade ELA classroom seating arrangements remained the same; however, the eighth grade ELA classroom's seating arrangement changed daily. The seventh grade classrooms consisted of AA males between the ages of 12 to 13 and the eighth grade classrooms consisted of AA males between the ages of 13 to 14. Students transitioned from class to class as a cohort; therefore, students had built noticeable relationships with

each other and each classroom dynamic was consistent. The observer noticed in each classroom that the teacher addressed each student as a “scholar” which contributed to self-fulfillment piece and made the classroom culture/climate more conducive to their academic success.

English and Language Arts Observations

During the seventh grade classroom observation before lunch, students were given instruction to complete a “Free Choice” writing prompt; the desks were arranged in a U-shape in a close knit classroom. While instructions were given, students were alert, engaged, and actively listening in order to maximize on time to complete their assignment. The classroom climate appeared very collegiate-like, student-driven, and individually paced until the end of the period. When students needed assistance, they raised their hands to be acknowledged by the teacher which meant they were well aware of classroom decorum. Towards the end of the observation, the teacher stepped out of the room and students got off task briefly to converse with each other. Once the teacher returned, students immediately stopped talking and continued to work on their writing prompts.

During the seventh grade classroom observation after lunch, the students were given a cultural-driven writing prompt to complete on their computers. This group of students seemed a bit more rambunctious and required a little bit more direction on how to approach their writing prompt which meant the lesson was a bit more guided. Once directions were repeated and clarified, students were able to work independently on the writing prompt. The teacher encouraged students to use a dictionary when working on

their writing prompts to extend their vocabulary. Students wrote on a topic that was rigorous and culturally relevant which made it easier for students to pace themselves. There were minimum distractions and interruptions during the observation which allowed the students to stay on task. Overall, students were highly engaged and focused on their writing prompt for the duration of the observation.

During the eighth grade classroom observation before lunch, students were given a writing prompt on “The Writing Process;” the classroom had 4 long tables in a U-shape (two in the back and two near the front of the classroom). Students were given 10 minutes to focus on sentence structure, grammar/mechanics, and fluid thought processes. During the work period, some students were on-task and others did not use their time wisely. The teacher re-directed students as off-task behaviors were witnessed; the teacher constantly encouraged them to build their writing endurance so they could prepare for the Georgia Milestones. Once the 10 minutes was over, the teacher called on different students to stand and present their individual papers. Students did not seem eager to volunteer so the teacher chose students at random to recite their prompts. During student delivery, the researcher noticed that the teacher would recite affirmations to stimulate student engagement and manage the classroom; the teacher made overarching analogies of how the class is a team and they are preparing for the Super bowl (Georgia Milestone). Towards the end of the classroom observation, the teacher reminded the students to aim for a 4 (Distinguished Learner) on the Georgia Milestones; this statement honed in on the promotion of academic rigor and student motivation in preparation for the Georgia Milestone. According to Rolland (2011), an unknown critic stated, one’s

success is not measured by grades but by one's determination to succeed; it is one's self-determination that drives academic achievement in the classroom. This further illuminates the notion that Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs – self-fulfilling prophecy is applicable and would directly impact the academic success of AA male students in the single-gender classroom.

During the eighth grade classroom observation after lunch, students were given a writing prompt on "The 3 Parts of An Essay;" this was essential to determining how they experience the process. Student desks were all slanted at an angle in 5 rows of two tables. Students seemed quiet and stagnant, yet a few students were not prepared for class. Since those students were not prepared for class, they were late starting the assignment. The teacher led a min-lesson on how to attack the writing prompt and expressed the importance of being conscious of the writing process. As the mini-lesson came to a close, students asked questions to gain clarity on the writing prompt; therefore, guided instruction took place for about 5 minutes. Once all questions were answered, independent practice lasted for 10 minutes. The peer interaction was extremely positive and students worked diligently during the work period. The teacher called on students to present their work, after the 10 minute work period was over. Again, the teacher made a conscious effort to build the morale by reciting affirmations of encouragement and delivering probing questions to get the student's mental though processes flowing.

Math Classroom Observations

During the seventh grade classroom observation before lunch, students were independently working on an "Angles/Triangles" worksheet; student tables were pushed

against the walls around the classroom and two tables were placed in the middle. The teacher had students do a warm-up on material that was covered the day before, after the warm-up, the teacher actively guided students on how to complete the assignment. The researcher noticed that students were engaged by working in groups which created a positive classroom climate. The teacher was in close proximity to the students which allowed him to provide personalized instruction and it was easier to guide those students who needed more assistance. There were periods when the teacher noticed there was some confusion on how to classify angles appropriately, the class stop working to allow the teacher to explain and clarify how to master the geometry standard. Lastly, the observer noticed that there was a strong sense of companionship and students seemed to be on-task for longer periods of time. Overall, students were highly engaged, it was evident that classroom expectations were set for students, and the focal point of instruction remained on the students.

During the seventh grade classroom observation after lunch, the students were tasked with classifying “Angles and Triangles;” the student tables were set up the same as before lunch. At the beginning of the observation, the students completed their warm-up assignment and the teacher discussed the answers with students. Once the warm-up was completed, the teacher stated the standard that students would master and conducted a 15 minute mini-lesson on classifying angles and naming triangles. Students were engaged, highly attentive and actively participated in the mini-lesson by asking and answering questions. The teacher allowed students to be mobile in the classroom since the student population was kinesthetic. The students required a lot of manipulative and real-world

situations to master classifying angles and triangles. Once all of the probing questions were answered, students were able to work independently and were able to be assessed on the classification of angles before the period was over.

During the eighth grade classroom observation before lunch, students worked on 'Input/Output' Functions in charts and graphs; student tables were in U-shaped formations on both sides of the classroom and one two tables were vertically aligned in the back. Students came into the classroom and started on their warm-up immediately. The observer noticed that the teacher made the input and output of functions relatable to being in a relationship when explaining if functions are proportional or not. The students were very receptive to the analogy and seemed to understand how to master the standard after it was delivered. Student behavior was immaculate and they were highly engaged and held each other accountable if bad behavior took place during instruction. After the mini-lesson ended, students worked independently or with a partner on the assignment given by the teacher; there were minimum distractions and classroom was managed effectively. Overall, the classroom climate was rigor-driven, student-centered, students had a high sense of independence and little to no re-directions were required for this group of students.

During the eighth grade classroom observations after lunch, students came into the classroom and completed a warm-up on "Input and Output Functions $f(x)$;" student tables were set up the same as before lunch. Students came into the classroom noisy and it took a long time to get started on their warm-up. While the teacher was going over the warm-up activity, there were a lot of conversations taking place which made it difficult

for instruction to take place. The observer noticed a lot of distractions, talking among peers, and disregard of the classroom expectations. The teacher eventually stopped to chastise the students which required a lot of redirection and enforcing classroom policy and procedure. Unfortunately, due to the student discipline issues observed in the classroom, the observer did not note any instruction of new concepts. The class was re-directed as a whole towards the end of the observation which alluded to the teacher having control in the classroom but 15 minutes of instructional time was lost.

Faculty Interview Protocol Discoveries

Interview Questions (IQ)

IQ1: What are some of the expected outcomes for African-American males who attend single-gender schools?

During the interviews, the participants felt that students were more focused on standards, have more specialized instruction to meet the needs of the students and single-gender education alleviates gender differences in the classroom. They expected to see high academic achievement rates, students being held accountable for their actions and to be heavily involved in the community. The eighth grade math teacher reported:

In short, I expect to see black excellence what that means is high achievement rates despite any socioeconomic challenges. I expect to see to see student buy-in into their education. I expect them to be held accountable for their education. I expect to see community involvement. They say it takes a village to raise a child.
(Personal communication, January 29, 2018)

AA male students tend to have a difficult time with self-identity meaning they are not aware of who they are and where they want to be. The seventh grade math teacher reported: “When an African-American male like myself come in, it gives them a sense of identity” (personal communication, January 29, 2018). In this institution, AA male students internally struggled with identifying who they are because they do not see many positive role models in their everyday lives other than teachers and possibly parents. So in short, the participants feel as if it is their job to be that role model for their students and hopefully positively impact their lives. Lastly, AA male students required much attention in regard to the way they learn; AA males were recognized as kinesthetic learners which requires movement, being mobile in the classroom, and applying manipulatives to the standard being taught. The eighth grade ELA teacher stated:

In my opinion, some of the expected outcomes is first more self-awareness. I think that being in a single-gender school offer the opportunity for scholars to look at more self-awareness... Being able to target those specific things that are conducive to that gender. For instance, we know a lot of times our boys function better when they are being engaged, we know they like being up on their feet like being interactive. If we are utilizing that text, they want to be able to see themselves in. (Personal communication, January 25, 2018)

IQ2: What resources are available to faculty for improving teaching and learning for African American males?

Participants stated that resources that were afforded to them are extremely helpful and can be seen as learning opportunities to improve teaching and learning. Technology,

such as calculators and protractors, are all readily available for their students, they provide simulated science labs, different activities and clubs are accessible for students to participate in. The school also provided a plethora of supplemental resources such as Achieve 3000, USA Test Prep, Compass Learning and Khan Academy. Also, participants reported that parental involvement has been a contributing factor to the success of their students since they often donate supplies to the classrooms. The eighth grade math teacher stated, “Parents are very supportive; they donate to the classrooms such as paper, pencils, highlighters, Kleenex, and other things to keep the classrooms clean” (personal communication, January 29, 2018).

Furthermore, knowing the students and building relationships were identified as being the cornerstone of Scholarship School; meeting their student’s personal and academic needs were essential to creating effective teaching and learning. Participants understood the school culture, the population that they serve, were aware of the resources that are provided for them and the community that they serve in; it is evident that the teachers in the focus group are deeply rooted with the school’s core values and effort to address AA male students’ personal and academic needs. The eighth grade ELA teacher stressed the importance of having a staff that is well aware of their environment and stated:

First of all, a well-educated staff; a staff that is very aware of the environment that we are in...we are utilizing our skills and our strategies to get acquainted with our scholars. We are meeting them on both an academic and a social arena.
(Personal communication, January 25, 2018)

IQ3: How often do you attend professional development sessions? How important is it to implement gender-specific instructional strategies in the classroom?

Participants stated that professional development occurred throughout the year and during summer months. Participants looked at attending professional development as an opportunity to grow their students since the education industry was ever changing. Not only were participants attending mandated professional development sessions but also taking the advantage of attending personal and professional ventures of their own. The eighth grade math teacher stated, “ Since I am a Lead Teacher, I have attended multiple leadership development conferences and trainings.” I went to a teaching mathematics cultural perspective workshop and I just thought that was amazing” (personal communication, January 29, 2018). The eighth grade math teacher stated, “I attend about 4-6 times a year” (personal communication, January 29, 2018)

Certain leadership trainings and conferences have provided cultural responsive strategies for the teachers to utilize in the classroom. A cultural response or approach taken from a professional development course is most effective, especially when you understand as an educator that reaching AA male students personally was the prerequisite to reaching them academically. The eighth grade ELA teacher stated, “Individually, I give myself a weekly track to work on professional development...the reason why it is important because we are in an environment that is ever-changing” (personal communication, January 25, 2018).

Participants believed that personal and professional development allows them to keep up with an ever-changing industry and it requires them to provide their students with innovative and effective instructional strategies to meet the needs of the students.

IQ4: Explain why African American male students learn differently from their counterparts? Why does this matter when it comes to academic achievement?

Participants stated that there were clear gender differences between males and females; they have different learning and coping styles. The seventh grade ELA teacher stated, “When there are distractions and corrections take place, they (males) are able to move forward instead of being stagnated” (personal communication, January 29, 2018). Participants reported that their AA male students were able to move forward and aren’t as sensitive when taking criticism from teachers and peers. On the other hand, when they become emotional about social and personal issues, they had difficulties expressing the way that they feel unlike their counterparts. Male students were identified as kinesthetic learners and require movement to be able to learn effectively. They believed that AA male students do not necessarily learn differently according to their gender, but everyone learns differently period. The eighth grade math teacher stated, “I don’t think that they (AA males) learn different from their counterparts”... “I believe that everyone learns differently. They learn differently because of what they learn at home.” She believed the foundation of learning comes from the household therefore learning should not start or stop at the school. Conversely, the seventh grade math teacher agreed but also makes a

valid point by saying: “It has been my experience that we come from a broken place”

Moreover, the eighth grade teacher added:

The first word that comes to my mind is cultural....I think that we have to address the cultural differences and then the socioeconomic environment. Everyone knows that the learning starts in the home. As a mom and an educator, that learning starts in the womb. (Personal communication, January 25, 2018)

Most importantly, cultural difference and socioeconomic status played an integral part in the development and initiation of the learning process for the students they serve.

Participants reported that as educators, they have to be vessels to be passionate about teaching so it can be transferred to their students being passionate about learning.

Participants really stood behind their institution’s core values and focus on building leadership and fortitude among their student population.

IQ5: Why is it important to make the curriculum rigorous and relevant for African-American males?

Participants believed that was very important to provide a rigorous and relevant curriculum in order to prepare them to globally compete with other students. Participants strived to push and grow their students to achieve mastery and score as distinguished learners. They believed that students who came from challenging, low socioeconomic households should be able to use the academic skills to survive in the world. The eighth grade math teacher stated, “Me personally, I challenge my students because I know they have challenges at home and I need for them to know that those survival skills are things

you need to know” (personal communication, January 29, 2018). The eighth grade ELA teacher added the following:

It is imperative. Reason why is for so long, our young men has not seen themselves in a good light...they are searching to find themselves, a positive role model, someone that they can identify with. I like to use words of affirmation. I need you to breathe life into your situation. (Personal communication, January 29, 2018)

According to Vroom’s expectancy theory, participants understand the importance of expected outcomes and motivation to perform well academically. Participants truly believed in the motivation factor, because it determined the outcome of the AA male students’ academic career. Participants believed it was their job to connect their students to the community that they live in and they should be extremely in tune with what is happening in the world. Their students required their guidance and by making the curriculum rigorous and relevant, AA males are afforded the opportunity to become “game changers.”

IQ6: Do you believe that single-gender instruction contributes to good behavior for African American males? Why?

Participants believed that AA males tend to demonstrate behavior authentically around their peers and teachers. The seventh grade ELA teacher reported,

About 85-90% of our scholars need that maternal. So, they still need some nurturing you know the rigor and man up fortitude, leadership, achievement. That

is what we push. They still are looking for that level of...or the percentage of nurturing in the classroom. (Personal communication, January 29, 2018)

AA male students generally needed that maternal guidance in the classroom which could infer they perform better academically for the female teacher. The eighth grade math teacher stated that eighth grade students experience so much social and personal issues being that they were the seniors of the middle school faculty. The eighth grade math teacher reported,

There are so many factors that contribute to my student's behavior. You got to think about their diet, you have to think about their attention span, you have to think about their personal health, you got to think about their comfort level wearing their uniform. (Personal communication, January 29, 2018)

The seventh grade math teacher reported, "I do, I do. Why I believe that is because there are less distractions" (personal communication, January 26, 2018). Fortunately, participants agreed that single-gender classrooms are beneficial for AA male students since they are not distracted with impressing their counterparts. AA males fostered a close relationship with each other by actively participating in creating a bond and a brotherhood with their peers; the accountability piece is so instrumental when AA males are in the developmental stages of adolescence.

IQ7: Please describe some of the classroom assignments and activities that you would normally plan for your students. How effective is it for African-American males?

Participants state that AA male students are being challenged to critically think and perform on high levels of understanding. The eighth grade ELA teacher stated,

I believe that the ideal lesson incorporates a vision from different perspectives.

The ideal lesson gives you the opportunity to hear, to speak, and to listen. I need to hear all three components. I need you to be actively listening, actively speaking and actively writing. So it is challenging your brain. (Personal communication, January 25, 2018)

Classroom assignments should intentionally challenge students to perform on higher levels of depth of knowledge to properly prepare them for the Georgia Milestones. The participants shed like on utilizing tabor stations to address the needs of each student's learning ability and also integrating technology in the classroom is highly important for them as well; she described it as organized chaos. Ultimately, AA male students are charged by their teachers each and every day with being active in the classroom; students should be able to critically think, deconstruct and analyze significant information so that they can gauge that higher level thinking.

IQ8: Can you express the importance of creating and fostering a positive school culture for African-American males?

During the interviews, the participants described the formation that the students take in the morning; students recite a pledge in the morning to foster a community of brotherhood. The students stand in the hallway to recite multiple pledges to foster a sense of unity in the school. The seventh grade ELA teacher reported the following:

The seventh grade has a pledge that they say and that's the Martin Luther King pledge 'Show Me.' Then, they have the school creed that they say to your brother and that fosters that unity of brotherhood. If they are saying that pledge 180 days out of the school year, it's there, it's there. It is all meaningful, it develops the culture, and it develops the climate for the school year. (Personal communication, January 29, 2018)

Not only does the Scholarship School charge the students to recite a pledge but the lead teachers also share a motivational speech for their homeroom classes. Participants truly believed that being transparent and honest with their students opens the door of open communication up and strengthens the trust factor for AA male students. Both eighth grade teachers reported,

It is important to establish close relationships with their students by day 3. It is essential. It is a part of the foundation of PBIS. It is one of the foundational pieces. How do you accomplish it? You accomplish it with honesty and transparency...students need to know that people who are leading and are in places of authority, they are human. (Personal communication, January 29, 2018)

Participants made it clear that it was imperative for teachers in a single-gender school who cater to AA male students who came from primarily low-socioeconomic status homes to foster close relationships and ensure that you are doing it with fidelity.

IQ9: Do you believe that African-American males struggle more in reading or math? Please explain why?

All participants believed that AA male students struggle with the fundamentals of reading versus math calculation and computation. The seventh grade ELA teacher stated, “I am finding out that young men are more analytical. They are number people, basically. They love anything dealing with Science, anything dealing with Technology; they just gravitate to it” (personal communication, January 29, 2018).

There were readers that read above grade level, however as a whole, students have difficulties with reading. Participants stated that “making” reading interesting and relatable would help strengthen AA male Lexile reading levels. Participants as a whole, believed that students must be able to understand what words mean and how to use expressive language in the classroom. Participants reported that reading is a fundamental skill that AA male students have to master to be successful in every subject. The eighth grade math teachers explained, “The rigor in math is not as difficult as it is in reading” (personal communication, January 29, 2018).

However, participants believed their students are not exposed to certain words but once they are exposed to it, then they are held responsible for defining and applying the new vocabulary word appropriately. One participant reported that his students expressed that it is nothing out there interesting to read so they have become disconnected with wanting to read. Not to mention, the home learning piece could also contribute to AA males’ inability to read as well when the seventh grade math teacher mentions:

Reading, basically because growing up it’s like our parents, we have this habit of telling kids to be quiet; don’t interfere or interrupt when grown folks are talking.

So it is hard for kids to express themselves because they have been stunted.

(Personal communication, January 26, 2018)

The eighth grade ELA teacher reported that research has shown that boys and girls learn differently due to how their brain develops, she stated,

For boys, the recognition of letters, the putting together of words, words putting together to make sentences and thus paragraphs, and the developmental stage is, I don't want to say slower because it's not slower, it is just develops in the way its suppose to for a boy....in a situation when we are teaching boys and girls, a lot of times we are teaching to the female student. A male student keeps a custom-design in order to thrive. (Personal communication, January 25, 2018)

Additionally, the eighth grade ELA teacher stated that in a co-educational setting, teachers gear instruction to cater to the female student and not to the male student. The developmental aspect of how boys learn is much different than how girls learn which requires specialized instruction to address the developmental needs of the male student. Participants agreed that AA male students require a custom-made, tailor-fit approach when meeting their personal, social, emotional and academic needs.

IQ10: What kinds of responses to intervention are put into place to aid gender-specific weaknesses?

Participants shared that you have to make the interventions more personalized and student centered to effectively address the weaknesses in reading. Give students a personal role in participating in reading and writing competitions so they are engaged and active in strengthening those weaknesses. One participant stressed that her students

utilize highlighters in the classroom so they can define unknown words and be able to apply it to the GA standards of excellence. The eighth grade math teacher reported, “My students, they are required to bring a highlighter to class and we highlight every word we do not know, even if it is not a math-related word” (personal communication, January 29, 2018). Participants reported that tutorials are offered to students who struggle with standards and enrichment is provided for students who are identified as top performers. The seventh grade math teacher stated, “I think that it takes a whole village to raise a child so we definitely have parent involvement. Once you allow that parent to know what going on with their child, then learning becomes that much easier” (personal communication, January 26, 2018).

The parents are informed and updated on their child’s academic progress however, they do not become as involved until progress reports or report cards are released. This teacher believed that parents could be more instrumental by being more engaged and active in their child’s educational endeavors. Participants shared that other interventions not only address academic but behaviors as well; teachers provide clear and defined expectations with students sets the tone and holding their students on a merit/demerit infraction system allows the teachers to curb student misbehavior.

IQ11: Do you believe that the gender of the teacher impacts African-American male academic achievement? Please explain your rationale.

Participants believed that they are shaping and molding their students to be respectable, upstanding and law abiding citizens. The seventh grade ELA teacher stated,

They need a break. Their peers are all single-gender males. When I walk in the morning, I can't carry my own briefcase or anything, because that is teaching them to be gentlemen. They will hold that door for me when I walk in. (Personal communication, January 29, 2018)

They want to continue to teach students to respect the opposite gender and have self-regard as well. The male students at the participating institution cannot conform to societal norms because they are held to a higher standard. Participants also believed that AA male students build a relationship and perform better academically for the gender that they need at that time. The eighth grade math teacher stated, "Absolutely, for my scholars who struggle with a maternal need, I'm most effective with them. For my scholars who struggle with a paternal need, they're not hearing me; they hear me but they are not connected" (personal communication, January 29, 2018).

Those students who have a maternal need will perform better for female teachers and those who have a paternal need will perform better for male teachers. Conversely, participants stressed the importance of building and influencing students to become what they are studying; participants believed that students should not see the gender of the teacher. The eighth grade ELA teacher stated the following:

It could, it could...it could. What I want to say about that and I want to use an example. I tell my scholars that when you go into your classrooms, I want you to be transported into the room that you are in. When you come into my ELA classroom, you are an author. I am in a room full of authors. When you go into a math classroom, you are a mathematician. When you are in science, you are a

scientist. When you are in history, you are a historian. So I need you to see me as another author and I need you to respect me for my craft because I am going to respect you. (Personal communication, January 25, 2018)

Therefore, AA males students should only see what title they hold such as authors, mathematicians, historians and scientist per say. Participants preached to their students that they should connect to the human quality and not to associate their teacher with their gender. In addition to this notion, participants also believed that AA male teachers can also be influential which could remedy that self-awareness and self-identity piece with their students. The eighth grade ELA teacher stated,

But I must say that I think one of valuable commodities that we do have are men who decide to come into education, particularly African-American men. Again, it is our boys who are given the opportunity to see what is possible. (Personal communication, January 25, 2018)

In summary, the gender of the teacher should not be a crucial factor in determining if an AA male student will be successful in the classroom. Every situation cannot be taken from a cookie-cutter approach since there are many variables that could change the academic achievement outcomes of AA male students. However, when AA male students see a male presence in the classroom, which would ultimately aid them with becoming more aware, develop self-identity, and provides them with the opportunity to be successful in the classroom and in the real world.

Document Analysis

Document Title: The Governor's Office of Student Achievement: Georgia School Grades Reports

Document Number/Code: N/A

Date Reviewed: February 3, 2018

Document Description: The document is a public-released and comprehensive school improvement, accountability, and communication platform for all educational stakeholders that will promote college and career readiness for all Georgia public school students.

Brief summary of contents: Contents include school demographics, school attendance, content area scores (Georgia Milestone Assessment), CCRPI numerical and alphabetical value, school-wide Lexile level, student mobility rate, school climate rating, and per pupil expenditures.

Significance or importance of document; Event or context, if any, with which the document was associated: This document's significance was extremely important because it progress monitors the school's academic achievement from year to year. It gives a snapshot of the school's performance and displays how well the school is performing regionally, in the state and nationally. The CCRPI report also included their middle school grades 2016-2017 school year's GA Milestone Assessment which groups their middle school grades percentages of student scores. Students were grouped and identified as Beginning Learners, Developing Learners, Proficient Learners, and Distinguished Learners. The following percentages for English/Language Arts Milestone

scores were as follows: 32.5% (Beginning Learner), 39.4% (Developing Learner), 26.5% (Proficient Learner), and 1.6% (Distinguished Learner). The following percentages for Math Milestone scores were as follows: 25.7% (Beginning Learner), 48.6% (Developing Learner), 21.7% (Proficient Learner), and 4% (Distinguished Learner).

How does it support or refute other, earlier understanding? It supports prior understanding of how single gender schools operate and function to promote a positive school environment, increase percentage of teacher morale, improve academic excellence and close the academic achievement gap among their counterparts. It may refute prior understanding with the CCRPI score being lower than a C in recent; however, that is expected when the rising 30% of the student population is larger than expected.

Preliminary Themes: Performance snapshot, academic growth, graduation rate, matriculation rate, Georgia Milestones, Reading, Math, Single Gender School, and Lexile reading level.

Important People: N/A – document did not highlight anyone specifically.

Important Quotes: “Its middle school students' academic growth is higher than 42% of middle schools in the state.” “Its four-year graduation rate is 88.0%, which is higher than 61% of high schools.”

What did the researcher discover learn? One key concept discovered by the researcher was that the school's snapshot profile of the CCRPI score was adequate and the school was not identified as a failing school. The report stated that the school's overall performance is higher than 40% of schools in the state of Georgia. Its middle school academic growth surpasses 40% than other middle schools in the state of Georgia.

The CCRPI document reports that 75.9% of its 8th grade students are reading at or above the grade level target.

Is the document central or critical to a particular idea/notion? If so, how?

Yes, this document is annual document that is updated that measures the school's individual academic performance and how it measure up against other schools in the region and in the state.

Is a copy of the document filed with another project? If so, where? No, the copy of the document is a public record document that is available for anyone to view.

The document can be found on Georgia's Department of Education website.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher reported the summary of the case study, discussion of the findings, and conclusions and implications driven from the findings. Future recommendations are provided and are solely based on the analysis of the data collected.

This case study explored and investigated the contributing factors that deeply impact AA male academic achievement as well as the challenges that AA males encounter in a single-gender classroom who come from a low-socioeconomic community. The overarching research question that guided the case study was: Does single-gender classrooms significantly improve AA male academic achievement in middle school grades?

The research questions that assisted in the case study were:

- RQ1: How does the presence of male teachers' impact AA male behavior in the single-gender classrooms?
- RQ2: What are the perceptions of students and teachers regarding the impact of teacher expectations on AA male student academic achievement?
- RQ3: What are the perceptions students and teachers regarding the impact of leader expectations on AA male student academic achievement?

- RQ4: What are the perceptions of students and teachers regarding the impact of disposition of instructional leader on AA male student academic achievement?
- RQ5: What are the perceptions of parent expectations regarding the impact of single-gender instruction on AA male academic achievement?
- RQ6: How do AA males describe their educational experience in a single gender classroom?
- RQ7: How is differentiation of instruction implemented in single-gender classrooms?
- RQ8: How has gender-based practices contributed to improving the academic achievement of AA male students?
- RQ9: What are the perceptions of Professional Learning Communities regarding the impact of AA male academic achievement?
- RQ10: What are the perceptions of gender-based teaching strategies regarding the impact of AA male academic achievement?
- RQ11: What are the perceptions of gender of the teacher regarding the impact of AA male academic achievement?

The descriptive case study was completed by conducting interviews with four teachers (two seventh grade teachers and two eighth grade teachers who teach ELA and math) and one administrator. Support with this process was provided by the chief academic officer of the institution in randomly selecting the classrooms to observe and teachers to interview. Due to the small research population of the school, there were only

one ELA and math teacher per grade level. The researcher gained approval from the local school board to conduct research at the institution; consent forms and confidentiality forms were disseminated to all students and teachers who participated in the case study. Each interview consisted of 11 questions and follow-up questions when necessary to gain clarity and understanding of participants' responses. All interviews were audio taped and transcribed. Research items were coded which led to contributing factors as themes emerged from interviews and student surveys. Students were made aware of the significance of the survey and clarified statements so that students could rate their attitudes and dispositions appropriately.

Discussion of Research Findings

RQ1: How does the presence of male teachers' impact AA male behavior in the single-gender classrooms?

The results of this study indicated that the gender of male teachers did not significantly impact AA male achievement in the single-gender setting. As stated previously in the data analysis chapter, there is a shortage of male educators, particularly African-American male educators in the industry. Traditionally, it was the norm that the United States educational system was saturated with female educators despite the race or ethnicity. According to Nicolas (2014), there has been a shortage in AA male teachers in the American educational system due to the stigma of African-American males occupying other roles in the school such as janitors, cafeteria workers, bus drivers or even as physical education teachers or athletic coaches. AA male teachers are largely underrepresented in the education industry since they only make up about 2% of our

nation's teacher population (Nicolas, 2014). Since men have entered into the education industry, more Caucasian educators were present in the classroom, yet AA male students cannot connect with them personally and socially. Nicolas also highlighted that schools base their decisions to hire teachers to see if they are the best "fit" for the school. Nonetheless, the school's dynamics could change if AA male teachers occupy positions in the classrooms. The AA male teacher need concept has been swept under the rug for years until recently; however, data from the student surveys clearly suggest that the gender of the teacher does not have significance on AA male academic achievement.

Conversely, during the interviews, teachers expressed that gender did not directly impact AA male academic achievement; however, fostering a close relationship with the student was the essential ingredient to improving academic excellence. Additionally, the faculty interviews suggested that having more AA male teachers in the classrooms would perpetuate a sense of self-identity, the students would be able to relate and draw connections to the teacher and it afford them with the opportunity to see another AA male in a positive way. Nicolas (2014) suggested that AA male students cannot be what they do not see; for instance, AA male students have a tendency to relate to athletes and rappers because that's what they are exposed to on television. Rolland (2011) added that AA male students desire AA male teacher interaction because they can address and relate to the developmental changes that they experience in middle school, they can emulate the behaviors and attitudes of their teachers and they can relate to them culturally.

RQ2: What are the perceptions of students and teachers regarding the impact of teacher expectations on AA male student academic achievement?

The case study results indicated that AA male students strongly agreed that their teachers set high classroom expectations for them. Participants also validated that statement by saying they push their students to score as distinguished learners on the Georgia milestones, they work on a merit/demerit system, they challenge their students critically and analytically each day in the classroom, they hold them accountable for their actions, they mandated all students to recite a pledge every morning to build morale and consecrate the school's culture, they charge their students to extend their vocabulary on a daily basis and they encourage them to occupy leadership positions in and outside of the school. According to Rolland (2011), educators play an integral part in AA male student academics simply because they are responsible for creating a positive classroom climate, they understand their student's socioeconomic status (SES), they foster close relationships, and motivate them to be successful in the classroom. Not only should the educators be monumental in the progress of AA male student achievement, but the instructional leader or principal should also be supportive in their endeavors by recognizing their accolades and also have a close relationship with them.

The principal and assistant principals do not spend as much time with the students unless they are handling student discipline or recognizing them for academic achievement; the need to foster that relationship is that much more important since they address and improve teaching and learning in the building (Rolland, 2011). Payton (2014) stressed that AA students and Latino students scored significantly lower in reading and math than their Caucasian counterparts due to teachers' neglect of setting high expectations for them. The responses of the participants in the interview validated

this concept of setting high expectations and holding their students accountable for their actions would essentially improve academic achievement. Not to mention, 98% of seventh graders and 88% of eighth graders who participated in the surveys agreed that their teacher sets high expectations therefore, they perform better academically because of that.

RQ3: What are the perceptions students and teachers regarding the impact of leader expectations on AA male student academic achievement?

As a future instructional leader, the researcher understood that setting high expectations for students helped to establish a concrete school culture, build morale among staff and improve quality of instruction and student learning outcomes. An interview was held with the Director of Student Support Services and Counseling and this individual had been affiliated with Scholarship School for 10 years. This position occupied one of the three primary administrator roles in the building and has direct contact with students on a day-to-day basis. During the interview, the Director of Student Support Services and Counseling stated that Scholarship School had been open for 10 years and had been built on three core values that have driven their STEM program: Leadership, Fortitude and Achievement. It was made clear that the culture and climate of the school had been a pivotal vehicle that drove the instruction program and produced high test scores for their particular school.

Moreover, the interviewee pointed out some of the expected outcomes were as follows: provide a rigorous yet culturally driven environment, manageable yet small teacher-to-student ratios, development of mentorships, highly qualified teachers to

provide quality instruction, develop students into civic leaders, student involvement in their community, and encourage parental involvement and engagement. Gallien (2012) further emphasized instructional leaders who work in low SES neighborhoods should implement culturally-relevant practices that support AA male academic achievement; leaders should be culturally sensitive to their students' social and personal needs in order to perpetuate low academic achievement of AA male students.

Scholarship School prides its close-knit institution on providing smaller teacher-to-student ratios in efforts to provide specialized, culturally-driven instruction for their students. This is one of the key components to stimulating the AA male student's academic success and their growth towards becoming one of the most premier public charter schools in Fulton County. With that being said, Scholarship School's mission and vision was specifically designed to integrate technology in the classrooms, offer remediation for struggling students, enrich students to become distinguished learners, and offer leadership training to develop their AA males into gentlemen with a purpose.

RQ4: What are the perceptions of students and teachers regarding the impact of disposition of instructional leader on AA male student academic achievement?

This research question was an extension of RQ3 to give a deeper, more thought-provoking explanation of the instructional leaders' disposition on improving AA male academic achievement. The researcher focused on this question to gain insight to the effectiveness of the instructional leaders' intent and how their intent was shared among the staff to contribute to growing their students academically. It was stated that

Scholarship School's primary focus was providing students with the opportunity to be transformed into civic leaders and citizens; they are known to use research-driven methods to provide a STEM-based curriculum for students. Further shared personal beliefs that both disposition and leadership style were a direct reflection of how "scholars" performed academically, the types of behaviors that students exhibit and the importance of their extrinsic and intrinsic values are. She also asserted that the Scholarship School's population comes from low SES backgrounds and that cannot be ignored; her staff tailors their instruction and mentorships to attack academic and personal needs of students. In due course, a leader in a predominately black community who does not address the cultural needs of their students is a careless and negligent leader.

According to Landeau (2012), a study was conducted to evaluate the correlation between the behavior of middle school principals and AA male academic achievement in a New York school district. The New York middle school principals submitted responses to a Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) to gauge the characteristics of their leadership style. The results yielded that middle school principals must possess leadership characteristics that will improve student learning outcomes, be aware of the socioeconomic statuses of their population, gain buy-in from their stakeholders and share responsibility of educating their students by involving parents and other role models.

RQ5: What are the perceptions of parent expectations regarding the impact of single-gender instruction on AA male academic achievement?

Parental involvement and engagement is known as being one of the three pillars to improve academic achievement. Rolland (2014) highlighted that parents who are actively involved, despite their socioeconomic status, would significantly improve their child's attendance, their behavior, increase the chances of matriculation and graduating on time, and increase the likelihood of attending college. Henderson (2017) reported that Joyce Epstein, a prominent educational theorist states that the school, the family, and the community must collectively work together to improve academic achievement outcomes. The school, the family and the community represent the educational triad or trinity that works succinctly to provide academic, moral and personal support in the classroom. Henderson suggested that all parents are not always identified as the traditional "mother and father" of the household. Looking through a social yet practical lens, the African-American community typically looks different in each household. For instance, some students reside with a single parent, other students may reside with their grandparent(s), some students are raised by their aunt and/or uncle, and unfortunately some students are represented as "foster or adoptive" children, placed in shelters awaiting to join a family or even homeless (Henderson, 2017). Consequently, parental involvement is a critical element when discussing the fluidity of the learning process. Learning should never stop at the school during the day; learning is an on-going process and it should be seamless to avoid regression of standards and concepts on a day-to-day basis.

Henderson (2017) conducted a study in 2017 at a public charter school in Atlanta, Georgia on the effectiveness of instructional leadership and its impact on AA male academic achievement; fortunately, the research was conducted at the same institution

and revealed some alarming results. The survey was disseminated electronically via Survey Monkey to gauge the opinions on past instructional leaders and if they were able to directly impact AA male academic achievement. Unfortunately, only 30 out of 70 participants responded to the survey, none of which were parents. Out of the small number of respondents, 68% strongly agreed that parental involvement positively impacted AA male academic achievement. In addition, since the researcher wasn't able to get raw data from parents, parental involvement adversely had no impact on AA male academic achievement. Although there was not a significant amount of respondents who participated, it further supports the notion that parental involvement is critical in contributing to AA male achievement in middle school grades.

RQ6: How do AA males describe their educational experience in a single gender classroom?

Recent research conducted by Rolland (2014) revealed that AA male students who attended school longer would become employed and be economically advantaged. AA male students perceived obtaining advanced and terminal degrees as a means to becoming employed, it would improve their socioeconomic status, their determination and motivation would spike, it would allow them to surpass their parents and grandparents educational goals and it would give them a sense of hope in their future endeavors (Rolland, 2014). Rolland indicated in his study that contributing factors such as parental involvement, teacher expertise, student-teacher social bonds, school culture, classroom size, effective instructional leadership, and setting high expectations directly impact academic achievement of AA male students. On the other hand, mitigating

factors such as socio-economic status (SES), parent/guardian educational level, lack of resources, no parental involvement, ill-prepared teachers, and lack of motivation could diminish academic achievement and double the failure rate of AA male students. As a matter of fact, AA male students require encouragement and moral support from the school, their families and the community so they can be successful in the classroom (Rolland, 2014). The survey results indicated that 92% of the seventh grade respondents agreed that they were proficient at ELA, 84% of the seventh grade respondents perceived themselves to be proficient in math; 78% of eighth grade respondents perceived themselves to be proficient in ELA and 81% perceived themselves to be proficient in math. The results from the student survey spoke to the fact that the contributing facts listed above were evident and present at their institution; students were clearly being supported academically in the school, at home and in the community.

RQ7: How is differentiation of instruction implemented in single-gender classrooms?

Due to the achievement gap that exists in American public school systems, particularly in Georgia, teachers and administrators must provide quality instruction for AA male students to improve academic success in the classroom (Rolland, 2014). Teachers who work at low-performing schools in impoverished neighborhoods and communities, instruction has to be purposeful and intentional to keep student management under control and stimulate student engagement. According to the faculty interviews, teachers believed that students must be held to a high standard in order to evoke academic success among their student population. During the interviews, all of the

teachers stated that before you can teach a student, a close relationship should be fostered such as gaining students' trust and creating positive social and personal bonds. Rolland referenced a 2003 study conducted by Lee and Burckham which proved that students are more likely to succeed in school and attend school longer if they have positive social bonds with their teachers and administrators.

Teachers reported that you have to be cognizant of a student's needs before they get into the classroom such as their diet, the way they fit their uniforms, pay attention to their motivational levels, and be aware of their temperaments. As stated previously, the theoretical framework of this study validates this with focusing on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory. Maslow stated that students most basic physiological needs have to meet in a sequential order in order for them to learn in the classroom. One of those needs are identified as the sense of belonging and being loved by their parent/guardian. During the interviews, the teachers reported that it is their priority to ensure that they have their students' best interest at heart which could include being a mentor, filling that "maternal or paternal" need, giving them lunch money when they need to eat, being able to coach them through a life-crisis situation or even challenging them academically or motivating them to be successful. As a teacher, it is our moral duty to be a role model for the student population that we serve and their success is a motivation within itself.

Also, during the interviews a recurring theme of "the prescribed AA male learning style" was addressed multiple times by all four teachers therefore, they differentiate their instructional deliveries in different ways. For example, the eighth grade math teacher explained that every day her students are charged with bringing a

highlighter to class; during whole group instruction, if a student does not know the meaning of a word, regardless if it is math-related, she has them highlight it and look it up in the dictionary. She explained that not only do they have to define math vocabulary but they have to be able to apply it to real-life situations; this strategy is used as a means to improving their survival skills. Another example of differentiation of instruction was discussed with the eighth grade ELA teacher; she tapped into her students' senses to master the standards. As previously stated in the data analysis, she expounded on how her ideal lesson would look like and expresses the importance of movement in her classroom and presentation skills. She stated,

I believe that the ideal lesson incorporates a vision from different perspectives.

The ideal lesson gives you the opportunity to hear, to speak, and to listen. I need to hear all three components. I need you to be actively listening, actively speaking and actively writing. So it is challenging your brain. (Personal communication, January 25, 2018)

This statement was so powerful because as a teacher, she truly understood how to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of the students academically, physically, and mentally. She clearly understood where her students come from and what strategy to utilize to address their learning needs.

RQ8: How has gender-based practices contributed to improving the academic achievement of AA male students?

During this case study, most of prior research or warranted assumptions were either proven or disproven; this was one of the variables that were proven but addressed

as a developmental issue. During the interview with the eighth grade ELA teacher, she explained that there are obvious gender “learning” differences that exist in the school system. She believed that boys and girls learn differently but she made it crystal clear that the developmental piece of boys and girls are different which can contribute to their ways of learning. According to Gurian and Stevens (2004), boys’ brains develop one-to-one and a half years behind girls in reading and writing, boys are attached to video games that involve physical movement and destruction, and generally get discipline for impulsive behavior. The traditional classroom does not serve the average male’s academic needs and it is best suited for the female student. Classrooms should be altered to accommodate the learning needs of boys to close the gender achievement gap, discipline and the reading/writing skill sets. In addition, AA male students have a much more difficult time learning in the classroom due to their gender and because of the cultural differences. AA male students continue to become targeted as a disproportionate student population who underperforms in the classroom. This finding has illustrated how detrimental the educational system is for AA male students and it further proves that co-educational classrooms have been designed specifically for female students; this also expounds on the fact that single-gender classrooms are best suited for the male learner, particularly the AA male learner.

RQ9: What are the perceptions of Professional Learning Communities regarding the impact of AA male academic achievement?

Historically, education has developed work sessions, workshops and seminars that were offered to help teachers become more acclimated with the curriculum and how to

deliver, differentiate and remediate instruction for students. The purpose of creating Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) is intended for teachers to collaborate, lead and engage in professional development as a group of experts and share instructional strategies to improve academic achievement (Watson, 2012). According to the interviews that were conducted, teachers have a personal and professional duty to develop their skill sets to properly prepare to serve their perspective student populations. Being a teacher in a single-gender environment warrants innovative, purposeful, and intentional instructional delivery to serve the AA male student. A major finding that was revealed was building a robust and close-knit culture for your student population is essential; especially among the teachers. The interviews revealed that teachers genuinely enjoyed serving their students, they are vested in the school's mission and vision, they collaborate with the community, and they involve parents and make it a conscious effort to attend their students' extracurricular activities. Essentially, PLCs are departmentalized, culture-driven, collaborative subgroups that aim to provide quality instruction for students and to ultimately to be recognized as change agents in the classroom.

RQ10: What are the perceptions of gender-based teaching strategies regarding the impact of AA male academic achievement?

During the interviews held with the teachers, a major emerging theme was consistent in all of the responses—gender-based teaching is an intentional instructional strategy that is utilized in single-gender classrooms. All of the teachers reported that their students struggle more with reading, not to mention, they all agreed that reading is a

fundamental skill that AA male students underachieve in. Davis (2003) stated that AA male students are shortchanged of their educational opportunities because of the amount of disciplinary actions that are inflicted upon them by their teachers. This would validate the point that since AA male students are disengaged in the classroom because their learning needs are not being addressed; surely if AA male students are being disciplined then they are being neglected of much needed instruction.

The seventh grade math teacher believed that single-gender education is best suited for AA males because there are less distractions (i.e., their female counterparts). He stressed that it was much harder for him to focus in school because he attended a co-educational institution. He also believed that AA male students would develop a stronger sense of self-identity if they see more AA male teachers. Teachers reported that their assignments are specifically designed to cater to the AA male's learning style of being kinesthetic (student mobility) in the classroom. Also, the eighth grade teacher stated that Response to Intervention (RTI) is a great strategy for their students to strengthen those fundamental skills such as reading, comprehension, analyzing, and denotation. In addition, AA male students are afforded the opportunity to participate in student-driven, self-paced lessons which increase the amount of student buy-in. Finally, the eighth grade ELA teacher reported that she creates assignments, student-driven activities, and projects that are infused in culturally-based texts in efforts for them to be able to relate or be able to see themselves as one of the characters they are reading about. This claim directly impacted the learning environment academically and socially for their students, not to mention, it makes it relevant to their culture.

RQ11: What are the perceptions of gender of the teacher regarding the impact of AA male academic achievement?

Out of all of the contributing independent variables discussed thus far, the gender of the teacher has revealed thought-provoking, significant yet unwarranted findings for this research. Per the student surveys, 62% compared to the 24% of the seventh grade respondents disagreed that the gender of the teacher impacts their learning and 65% compared to 28% of the eighth grade respondents disagreed that gender of the teacher contributes to their academic success. In addition to this finding, teachers reported that gender of the teacher does not matter; however, it depended on the absence of the “maternal and paternal” need of the student. As stated previously, students who are missing that “maternal” element would more than likely perform better academically for their female teachers. On the other hand, students who are missing that “paternal” element would more than likely perform better academically for their male teachers. Hamlet (2012) referenced Dr. Jawanaza’s Kunjufu’s book, *Countering The Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys* which illuminated that the contributing factor that impacts the academic achievement of AA male students were predicted by the gender of the teacher. Hamlet (2012) stated that since there is an overrepresentation of female teachers in the public and private sector, they are more likely to teach AA male students. Consequently, from a philosophical counterpoint, Hamlet quoted from Boris Johnson who believed the underachievement of AA male teachers could potentially be caused by the absence of AA male teachers in the classroom. Moreover, Hamlet also cited another counter-claim that

suggested if a teacher of a different gender and race taught AA male students, it would be detrimental to their academic success.

Fortunately, Hamlet used a qualitative approach in a 2012 study to explore AA male students' perceptions of race, gender, and teacher beliefs. He found that some students did not care about the race of their teacher and others stated that race matters. Hamlet discovered that AA students didn't care about the race or gender because they saw past the physical characteristics; instead the students were more interested in "self-worth" and "being cared for." In addition to this significant finding, student responses revealed that they were being transformed into their "new-self" and they wanted their teachers to realize that transformation. More importantly, the responses from the teacher interviews further validates this notion and makes the gender of the teacher irrelevant to contributing to academic achievement. The eighth grade ELA teacher said it best; she concluded her interview stating that she wanted students to look past her gender. She eloquently expressed that students should disregard their teachers' gender and identify with their expertise—if they are in history then respect the teacher as a historian, if they are in math then view the teacher as a mathematician, and if they are in ELA then view the teacher as an author. In summary, students want their teachers to understand their story and also be aware that AA male students have feelings. Whether they know it or not, that would strengthen the argument that gender doesn't matter but it is the teacher-student relationship that contributes to AA male academic achievement.

Conclusions and Implications

In conclusion, the results of this case study have exposed significant warranted and unwarranted findings to the researcher. This study was designed to explore the effectiveness of single-gender classrooms and how it truly impacted the academic achievement outcomes of AA males. It was with great intention to prove that a close-knit single-gender classroom is the “best fit” for AA males in low-income neighborhoods; research has supported that instruction should be gender-specific and culturally sensitive to address the achievement gap that exists in public and private education.

The formula for contributing to AA male achievement is not as simple as assumed prior to the case study; however, the components were discovered succinctly with careful observation of the single-gender environment, cautious analysis of the statistical academic data (CCRPI Report) of the Scholarship School and documentation of insightful perceptions from teachers and administration. The research has shown that AA male achievement cannot be remedied from a “one size fits all” approach and requires much attention and strategy when making purposeful contributions to it. Initially, the gender of the teacher was assumed to be a contributing factor to AA male academic achievement but the results from the interviews and surveys proclaimed that the gender of the teacher does not impact AA male academic achievement. Although this notion has been validated by students and prior research, it is clear that more AA male teachers could significantly close the achievement gap. More AA males would be able to identify with AA male teachers and become more aware of who they want to be. More importantly, instructional leaders and teacher must address the loss of the “maternal and

paternal” issue by creating mentorships with AA male students. Instructional leaders and teachers who work in the single-gender sector contribute to AA male achievement by fostering a close relationship with students by taking a culturally-responsive approach during instruction. Teachers from the Scholarship School have made the curriculum rigorous and relevant by setting high student expectations, invoked critical thinking skills, invested and believed in the school culture, and challenged their students to become pioneers to learn, lead and change the world.

The results has presented the notion that AA male students’ brain develops differently than their counterparts yet this further expounds on why AA males struggle with reading than math. AA male students are drawn to the framework of mathematics and can manipulate numbers (calculation and computation) easier than comprehending a text in reading or formulating sentences in ELA. Traditionally, the co-educational classroom setting has provided instruction that is geared towards female students which adds to the wealth of literature of AA males being disproportionately targeted as “chronic underachievers” in the American public school system. With that being said, a prescribed remedy is to provide engaging classroom activities that involve movement such as acting out a scene in a book, building robots in a science lab, or even using manipulatives such as blocks to figure out how to add integers in math class; this would cater to the kinesthetic abilities that AA males possess to learn new concepts.

Although the researcher did not receive any feedback from parent surveys, noteworthy research along with responses from the interviews, have made it painfully obvious that parental involvement and engagement is a non-negotiable when considering

the achievement rates of AA male students. The school, the family and the community have a collective responsibility to educate their children. Ultimately, instructional leadership is where school reform begins; a shared mission and vision is the driving force towards academic growth and achievement for AA male students. The Scholarship School makes it clear that creating a common sustainable culture and climate with tangible core values that all key constituents can buy-in to will afford equal educational opportunities for all students.

Recommendations

School Districts and Personnel

Gender of the teacher is Insignificant to the case study. According to the findings and conclusions, the gender of the teacher does not impact AA male academic achievement.

Recommendation: School district and administrators should focus on hiring highly qualified teachers regardless of the gender so they can provide quality instruction.

Low student-to-teacher ratio classrooms contribute to AA male student achievement. According to the findings and conclusions, the low teacher-to-student ratio classrooms have a significant impact on AA males in single-gender classrooms.

Recommendation: Single-gender schools should strategize on making their teacher-to-student ratios smaller so that teachers can provide personalized and specialized instructional strategies to AA male students.

Single-gender schools should create ways for AA male students to socialize and interact with their counterparts. According to the student survey results, seventh and

eighth graders overwhelmingly disagreed that they enjoyed being in single-gender classrooms.

Recommendation: School administrators, along with the school board members, should consider creating a day or a special time that AA male students can interact with their female counterparts during connections classes, extracurricular or sports events, interactive academic clubs, study halls, etc.

Recommendation: School board members should consider single gender instructional strategies in a traditional setting so that the social needs of both sexes can be intentionally planned while at the same time providing the qualitative classrooms for single gender groups.

Limitations of the Study

According to the rules and regulations of research that are out of the control of the researcher, the analysis of the case study experienced unforeseen limitations that impeded the collection of data. The following limitations that were presented were as follows:

(a) Survey results were skewed due to missed questions on student surveys; (b) parent surveys data could not be collected therefore making it impossible to gauge current expectations of single-gender classrooms; (c) researcher could not link classroom data (assessment data, class work assignments, TKES, etc.) to the individual teachers that were observed; (d) teachers were not informed of what they were being observed on and did not see the observation instrument; (e) schedule conflicts of students and teachers were presented (each grade level had different schedules; students did not transition at the same time) and teachers had different planning periods on same grade level; and (f)

classroom observation data could have been skewed (unauthentic) due to presence of researcher.

Summary

This chapter explored the overarching research question: What contributing factors in a single-gender setting impact AA male academic achievement? The intent behind the case study was to explore and examine the academic achievement outcomes of AA male students in single-gender classrooms. From a mixed-method approach, student and parent surveys were administered, in-depth teacher and instructional leader interviews were conducted, and a document analysis of the Scholarship School's CCRPI Report was closely analyzed. The findings and conclusions that were reported from the research questions were empirical and thought-provoking to gauge the direction that single-gender schools should travel in. Implications, future recommendation for research, and limitations for the study contributing to the strategies and practices finished this chapter.

APPENDIX A

Parent/Student Letter of Confidentiality

Greetings Parents and Guardians:

My name is Christopher Anthony Thomas, Jr. and I am a doctoral student in the College of Education at Clark Atlanta University. I am writing to request permission for you and your child to participate in my research on African American academic achievement outcomes in single gender classrooms. You and your child are eligible for participation in this study based on what I understand are characteristics about your demographics and educational backgrounds. If you allow your child to participate in this study, he will be asked to complete a student survey that includes demographics and questions in regards to their educational experience in a single gender classroom. I will be administering a parent/student survey in September 2017 via Survey Monkey or distributing a hard copy in his classroom.

You and your child will not be paid for your participation. However, you all will express their dispositions and attitudes on a Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, etc.) on the effects of single gender classroom. This study will help to inform future research and foster an understanding of how single gender classrooms contribute to African-American male academic achievement.

Remember, your permission to allow your child to participate is completely voluntary and your identity will remain confidential. If you would like for your child to participate in the student survey, please provide a signature below confirming that you understand and agree. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

_____ Yes, I voluntarily give permission for my child to participate in the student survey.

_____ No, I voluntarily do not give permission for my child to participate in the student survey.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sincerely,

Christopher Anthony Thomas, Jr.
Clark Atlanta University
Christopher.thomas@students.cau.edu

APPENDIX B

Faculty Interview Letter of Confidentiality

Greetings Faculty and Staff:

My name is Christopher Anthony Thomas, and I am a doctoral student in the College of Education at Clark Atlanta University. I am writing to invite you to participate in my research on African-American male academic achievement outcomes in single gender classrooms. You are eligible for participation in this study based on what I understand are characteristics about your demographics and your role as the teacher or instructional leader in your school.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an in-depth questionnaire on the effects of gender-based instruction and your expected outcomes for your student population as a teacher or instructional leader. I will interview you between August and October 2017. You will choose an in person or via phone interview and select a date and time that fits in your schedule. If time does not permit, the researcher may request a follow-up interview with you.

You will not be paid for your participation in the interview. However, you will be able to express your dispositions and beliefs on single-gender classrooms and how it benefits African-American male academic achievement. The intention of conducting this study will allow the researcher to fill in the gaps of prior research and provide recommendations for future research on the single-gender phenomenon.

Remember your participation is completely voluntary and your identity will remain confidential. If you'd like to participate or have any further questions about the study, please email me at Christopher.thomas@students.cau.edu by August 31, 2017. Please include "AA Single Participant" in the subject line, and include your current contact information as well. Thank you very much for time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Christopher Anthony Thomas, Jr.
Clark Atlanta University
Christopher.thomas@students.cau.edu

APPENDIX C

Observation Document Form


Date of Observation: _____ Time of Day: _____ Observer: _____

Grade Level: _____ Class: _____ Teacher/Instructor: _____

Beginning Time: _____ Ending Time: _____

What are the noticeable behaviors that the students are exhibiting in the classroom?

Classroom Layout



What type of classroom activities occurred in the classroom?

Were there signs of gender-specific instruction?

Discuss the classroom climate/culture:

How did students react to the lesson?

Did students understand the concepts that were taught?

What type of assistance did the students require for the lesson?

Were students engaged in the lesson?

How did students interact with each other?

Concluding Commentary	Recommendations

APPENDIX D

Student Survey

Demographics Data

Age: _____

Grade: _____

Class: ☐ Reading

☐ Math

1. The gender of my teacher impacts the way that I learn.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

2. My teacher sets high expectations in the classroom.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

3. I enjoy learning in a single-gender environment.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

4. My teacher makes learning new concepts easy to understand.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

5. While I am at home, I receive help with my homework.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

6. I believe that single-gender education contributes to my academic achievement.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

7. My parents are involved and engaged at my school.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

8. I perform well in my ELA/Reading class.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

9. I perform well in my Math class.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

10. My school fosters a positive school culture.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

APPENDIX E

Parent Survey

Demographics Data

Age: _____ Gender: _____

Occupation: _____

Highest Level of Education: _____

Socioeconomic Status: _____

1. I am involved and engaged in my child's education.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

2. I help my child at home with their homework.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

3. Single-gender education benefits my child's academic achievement.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

4. My child's teacher meets their gender-specific needs in the classroom.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

5. My child is motivated to perform well academically in school.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

6. My child actively participates in gender-driven activities in the classroom.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

7. My child's school fosters a positive school culture.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

8. My child feels safe and secure in the classroom.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

9. My child is more focused in a single-gender school.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

10. Single-gender education encourages my child to exhibit positive behavior.

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

APPENDIX F

Teacher/Instructional Leader Interview Protocol

Faculty Interview Protocol

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Single-Gendered Theory, Paradigm Shift, Student Learning Outcomes Interviews

Introductory Protocol

To facilitate my note-taking, I would like to audio tape our conversations today. Please sign the release form. For your information, only researchers on the project will be privy to the tapes, which will be eventually destroyed after they are transcribed. In addition, you must sign a form devised to meet my human subject requirements. Essentially, this document states that: (a) all information will be held confidential, (b) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (c) we do not intend to inflict any harm. Thank you for your agreeing to participate.

I have planned this interview to last no longer than one hour. During this time, we have several questions that we would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning.

Introduction

You have been selected to speak with the researcher today because you have been identified as someone who has a great deal to share about single-gendered classrooms on this campus. The research project as a whole focuses on the improvement of student learning outcomes, with particular interest in understanding how single-gender education has driven progressive classrooms, analyzing gender-specific learning styles, and how single-gendered classrooms can broaden the educational scope for both genders. The study does not aim to evaluate your techniques or experiences. Rather, we are trying to learn more about single-gendered classrooms, and hopefully learn about faculty practices that help improve student learning on campus.

Interview Questions

1. What are some of the expected outcomes for African-American males who attend single-gender schools?
2. What resources are available to faculty for improving teaching and learning for African-American males?
3. How often do you attend professional development sessions? How important is it to implement gender-specific instructional strategies in the classroom?
4. Explain why African-American male students learn differently from their counterparts? Why does this matter when it comes to academic achievement?
5. Why is it important to make the curriculum rigorous and relevant for African-American males?
6. Do you believe that single-gender instruction contributes to good behavior for African-American males? Why?
7. Please describe some of the classroom assignments and activities that you would normally plan for your students. How effective is it for African-American males?
8. Can you express the importance of creating and fostering a positive school culture for African-American males?
9. Do you believe that African-American males struggle more in reading or math? Please explain why? What kinds of responses to intervention are put into place to aid gender-specific weaknesses?

10. Do you believe that the gender of the teacher impacts African- American male academic achievement? Please explain your rationale.

APPENDIX G

Document Summary Form

Document Title: _____
Document Number/Code: _____
Date Reviewed: _____

Document Description:

Brief summary of contents:

Significance or importance of document; Event or context, if any, with which the document is associated:

How does it support or refute other, earlier understanding?

Preliminary Themes:

Important People:

Important Quotes:

What did I learn:

Is the document central or critical to a particular idea/notion? If so, how?

Is a copy of the document filed with another project? If so, where?

APPENDIX H

Faculty and Instructional Leader Interviews

Seventh Grade Math Teacher Interview

What are some of the expected outcomes for African-American males who attend single-gender schools in your opinion?

Interviewee: It was some of the few words of equality. Some African American men. I'm not privy to some of advantages that most of their counterparts are offered so when black men the black mentors such as myself come in it gives them identity.

What resources are readily available to you all as faculty to help with teaching and learning in the classroom?

Interviewee: We have. We have the basics we have books we have. Access to technology experts such as yourself now inside of coming in and getting off so long in the Handler need it okay. So with those resources that are readily available.

How often do you attend professional development and how why is it important to attend professional development in single-gender classroom?

Interviewee: I was saved by a large probably 46 times a year was it important because with education like everything else is constantly changing.

Interviewer: Absolutely.

Can you explain why African-American male students learn differently from their counterparts in why does this matter when it comes to academic achievement?

Interviewee: Wow that's an excellent question it's been my experience that. We come from a broken a broken place. We learn differently. Honestly, that's unique Jesse awesome another unique question okay we want to get money because for me personally. I like to be active settings for sit down and be quiet you know I know in Russian. And then add the student I will be lost so that man said this is probably why we learn differently on different fabric.

So why is it important to make the math curriculum regular rigorous and relevant to your student population?

Interviewee: Well you know what's out there. Our young men to be competitive out there if it's a month. I guess with especially with math you do math every day without even thinking about it and so I guess it's just sometimes it is hard to me like when students aren't able to tell time or they're not able to count money and I mean I've been count as soon as like that I deal with him every day I have. And that's just the harsh reality that our community faces.

Do you believe in the single-gender phenomenon and if so do you believe that it honestly contributes to good behavior for African American?

Interviewee: Repeat that please.

Interviewer: I'm sorry yes do you believe that single-gender instruction contributes to good behavior for African-American males and why?

Interviewee: I Do I Do It. That's why was I'm going to be because some. Less distractions and of course you know that element being taken out because I was a little bit more focused.

Interviewer: So it definitely helps being in a single-sex classroom

Interviewee: Absolutely.

So just briefly could you please describe one classroom assignment what does that look like in your classroom and how effective is it? So for instance, does it involve movement, does it involve manipulatives or small groups?

Interviewee: I put a question and the class along with myself we answered together and wants to I feel that you're getting it I would give them up 30-question similar in that they work out on their own. But I don't answer your question it's only a deduction the lesson we work it out together in the homework is actually yours that's what that's what that's what they actually work on a home okay.

So with that being said before you can reach a student academically you have to know them personally, so can you express the importance or stress how important it is to foster a close relationship with your students?

Interviewee: What's been my experience is they (students) refused to produce anything unless they know that you care so yeah definitely over for stepping important with our type of students.

Why do you believe it won't let me ask let me ask you this do you think that African-American struggle more in reading or math and why?

Interviewee: Reading. Basically because going off is like. Our parents we have this strong habit of telling kids to be quiet. Don't interfere or interrupt grown folks conversations. So talking is so it is hard for kids express myself because it been started

that being said I think reading would be that I'm reading is the foundation of it everything.

So what kind of interventions do you put in place to cater to African-American male students?

Interviewee: I think I'll just take the whole village to raise a child so I definitely have parent involvement you'll be surprised you know once you are allowed to parents to know exactly what's going on with it with a child. How is learning it comes out much smoother.

Interviewer: I mean so I completely agree.

Last question do you believe that the gender of the teacher impacts African-American male student achievement and if you do is please explain your rationale.

Interviewee: I guess the teacher was like you said goodbye in something by him so yeah that will be my answer.

Interviewer: It's really interesting that you said that because. There is a there is an obvious culture that exists here in the school because all of the teachers that I come in contact with have the same rationale really is I mean that's not a bad thing that's a great thing but it's so you all are so in tune with calling your students Scholars which is way more better than calling them a student so there's a culture here that has manifested.

Seventh Grade ELA Teacher Interview

All right so today's date is January 29th at 3:02 p.m. my name is Christopher Thomas the primary researcher and I have a pleasure to sit down with one of the educators at this institution. If you could just please tell me the grade that you teach, the subject that you teach, and how long you been teaching ELA?

Interviewee: I've been teaching 25 plus years and have absolutely not I've been teaching in the single gender for 5 years.

What are some of the expected outcomes that you have for your male students that attend this institution?

Interviewee: On down standard said more one-on-one with their instructors at the actually. Set the goals for the Mastery because it's an environment that that can happen because they have a tutorial on hand what's the distraction by being in a single gender School.

Interviewer: I completely agree.

Being an educator in a single gender school what resources are readily available to you as a faculty member to contribute to the student population?

Interviewee: Being in a single gender are co-ed environmental resources are about the same basically, I don't see any differences, they may have more opportunities are different should I say opportunities such as competition that's only for young men not so much resources as much for me the opportunity.

How often do you attend professional development and why is it important to attend professional development for the population you serve?

Interviewee: I try to find a professional development that would be conducive to where I am I related to where I am and it's very important because we're serving a different kind of culture and the time it is important that we are in tune yes it's different education is totally different today on all of the changes step.

Could you explain the difference of teaching male students than their counterparts do you believe that male students learn differently from their counterparts and why does that matter in this kind of setting?

Interviewee: Do they learn differently I just spelled that Scholars male or female have their own learning style inventory some Visual, Basic, more on the individual scholar. Then I was on the male female. For the males they can they know how to move forward quicker. Okay to expel them that a little bit more when there's distraction and correction takes place instead of yelling and being sensitive to what just happened that make sense.

So why is it important to have a rigorous and relevant curriculum for your students?

Interviewee: It is very important that they have a relevant literature because once they get out of the schools and out of the stores the competition it's not always the playground it's always not leveled for them so they've got to be able to compete. Compete on every level and not just stopped in their area they got to compete across the board as you're preparing them.

For Global competition is not just regional. 80. and 80s. That's fine but we have to shoot for 95 and above or not to go from masturbating it's good for me basically 7 days does mediocre you did just a requirement so please don't think that you are above level because you're not and doesn't even really count as a factor right now so I'll go let's very regular said if we go for 90 and above we go for the distinguished I've heard that in many of the classrooms that I visited and I think it's okay. We got to aim for distinguish.

Being that you said that you are hope high expectations for your students do you believe that being in the single-gender setting contributes to good behavior for your students?

Interviewee: good behavior it would be a different Behavior base for the back that by being in a single-gender you would hope they wouldn't have to feel that they would have

to put on an act or come out of character for their counterpart okay so it's a different behavior is probably going to be the better writer or who's more punctual than others or who has perfect attendance simply because you know.

Interviewer: As a male especially a middle school you going through a transition some males.... they need that maternal connection and some males need that part I understand where you coming from that's really a good thing to notice about 85 to 90% of our Scholars need that maternal.

Interviewee: So they still need some nurturing even though it's a rigorous in Man of fortitude leadership achievement that's what we push our scholars as well.

Describe briefly what a classroom assignment is or activity normally look like for your students in your classroom.

Interviewee: We are working on critical thinking umm... and the six levels of thinking skills actually breaking it down so whenever they see any type of literature they should be able to tell what level of thinking this is so right now we're on level 4 and level 5 analyzing and evaluating information is passed to remember and understanding level 1 and level 2 but now we're applying that information. It's not that are stylish or do not know the information. They are challenging challenged and knowing exactly what do they want me to do but some of the model questions that's on my board they're asking questions like what is the least essential I'm statement. They have to analyze that affected break it down.

Okay. Can you express the importance of creating and fostering a positive School culture for your students can you express the importance of creating and fostering a positive school culture for your students?

Interviewee: Have you seen our formation first thing in the morning when they come in all the students in the hallway.... so they have the core values which is fortitude, leadership & achievement okay what's taking that the sixth graders have a pledge if they say and that is see it through the 7th grade have a pledge that they say and that's all the Martins the cave glitch show me know. Okay then they have the ____ Creed that they say for your brother and that Fosters that Unity so was instilled in them if they are 180 days out of the Year and that develops a culture that develops the climate of the school with the FMLA Creed as far as why we hear what is division do I listen to all of that is included in that 3 and then after that I'm believe teachers give motivational speeches. Maybe 2 minutes 3 minutes long. The academics I really love that I really love that okay.

Do you believe that African-American males struggle more in reading or math?

Interviewee: Reading and the reason I say that is because that's where if that's it feel that I'm in and not so much reading and calling words in or waiting as much as comprehending what you are reading for what did you just read and asking the level 3 4 5

6 questions about what they were the set of just the who what where when this goes deeper exactly so I would say.

Reading because I'm finding that out a little bit and they are numbers people basically so they love anything dealing with fire anything dealing with technology and then they just gravitate to it some creative writers and readers who are above average but I noticed we have a lot of.

So being that you identified reading as a weakness what kinds of interventions are put in place to remedy the weaknesses?

Interviewee: First of all, the first thing you must do is to make it interesting make it fun... why are you leaving what is the purpose for this is not just to get a break then we start to break it done and I love teaching of poetry you wouldn't think that Middle School boys.....once it's broken down and once they can see that this is a meeting I can get my own interpretation because the author gave his interpretation so I can write my own poetry and it's based on what I feel. So when they get into that it's like about me my feelings. It becomes more fun for them...more personalized we have reading competition they like that I do see that my boys young man take lead and value at all so if you give them a personal role in it make it fun make it interesting let them know the importance office it help. It does and I need that sense of accountability so that they can so you can make them into leaders and so did it so it becomes more of you are the facilitator instead of being you know. If I have demonstrated what the classroom looks like what the expectations are if they see it every day I see it and it's done with a purpose so you all...really good results.

Do you believe the gender of the teacher impacts African-American male student achievement?

Interviewee: When I first came on board I have a question I need a break. Their peers are all single gender male they need something to. And I have tough love but when I walk in the morning I can't carry my own briefcase or anything because and that teaching them to be gentleman as well as follows as well whatever so we are teaching them to be upstanding African-American and Hispanic. Young man who have respect for the opposite gender illusion at the disrespect that I see in general in the public that the young man. And regarding females because that's part of the Creed as well they have to respect the opposite gender and they know they cannot walk in here sagging because they can wear jeans to a private but they can't they can't do what the world that the set apart and that's in that standard this is made very clear.

Eighth grade Math Teacher Interview

Okay good afternoon the time is 12:32 p.m. on January 29th 2018. Thank you again for carving out some time to complete this interview. If you could just give me the

grade that you teach your position at the institution and how many years you've been teacher.

Interviewee: I'm the eighth grade math department chair and I have been teaching for 4 years now

So with that being said what are some of the expected outcomes for African-American male students that attendance institution do you expect to see?

Interviewee: Achievement rate despite any social economic challenges. I expect to see student education, expect them to be held accountable for the education and their community involvement with all of these expected outcomes.

What resources are available to you as a faculty member to improve teaching and learning for African American.... African-American male students?

Interviewee: We have laptops and granite that's like the mainstream for of Technology but we also have things that people don't consider technology such as by calculators rulers for tractors and things like that those are also looking for a Technology Center identifier technology experience with the things that they are studying we have stimulated math or science lab.

I guess manipulating things like Legos and other items I'm not really sure what the details of that are but I have a chest that we have different activities and clubs with different tools you know amount of remediation tools online measurements like USA Testprep, Compass Learning, Achieve3000 at the ELA social studies and Science portal and thousand Khan Academy, those are for mainstream online resources for that we use for highlighter is Kleenex hand sanitizers we have things to keep the classes clean we have resources to keep the students engage with a V online learning using you know math tools. And pretty much anything that we need generally ask for it is not always a yes but if it's like something feasible you know we can get it in a quick turnaround.

So how often do you attend professional development sessions in why is it important to attend professional development when you're addressing single-gender classrooms?

Interviewee: Because I'm serving as the as the leadership figure in the department, professional development instructor a teacher the other month and they were hefty special developments that I went to the conference last year it was in Philadelphia. 3 sessions were held on May 27th and 30 seconds in 4 days. It's important as a teacher who is very passionate about teaching specifically the population that I serve it is that many people think that that the mainstream American education system... you know I'm built to serve the same people that are looked at as different so you know what's his name. Professional development hosted by African-American is so important and it's unnecessary color is more so like the culture like the things I owe ya workshop last year was talking about like how these different historical archives in my different Bones from tunes and things like that were used to calculate things in my mind I'm thinking like this is amazing and it showed up for dinner show how that Kobe Bryant resemble is relevant to functions and

therefore within his lineage to be great and how to use. The calculation to determine more so from an African perspective from formula sheet from a cultural perspective grasping the concept a lot quicker... I've never even heard of I can only imagine how effective it would be towards my student you know if they have the same or similar experience in Edmonton at makes that makes sense because you have to. You have to think about the cultural differences in the classroom outside of the classroom because someone skin is all brown but that doesn't mean you're sitting by the person and how does from that how does my teaching needs to improve you know not be informal sometimes you had a. I'll teach them about input and output relationship oh yeah speak their cultural language to transfer it to I guess the standard absolutely.

So explain why African American students learn differently from their counterparts in why it matters when it comes to their academic achievement?

I don't like specifically they learn different from their child for I feel like everyone learns differently I think it's because of their culture is because you know what's happening at home for the most part I can speak to my boys I know that they come from a very wealthy Family Dollar come from single-parent homes and is little sprinkle you know of our students who may be in need of foster care or homeless and it's more so. If they learn differently because they have different opportunities at home you know like if you're if you're a parent and you're at home reading for your son at age was the first absolute outlining all this is a special group. I think it's more so they learn differently because of their socioeconomic status for because of their upbringing I've done a lot of research on the African American and I'm just but I'm just not anybody else you know where the weather be how we interact socially financially.

That nobody else had and that nobody else can come close to getting for our boys admit because their leaders and makes you know they have no choice but to do that what does happened to that great in it to do it because otherwise it can be a controversial statement you haven't lived your purpose you know so. To me it's important that they tap into it and if they reach it and I'm not expecting to get this expecting it to happen in the 8th grade

Interviewer: I'm just honestly that was a really an innovative type of answer that I wasn't expecting so I appreciate the response.

Why is it important to make that curriculum rigorous and relevant for your student population?

Interviewee: Me personally because I know they have challenges at home at home at the same time that you're going to fly right weather be in academics dating someone, or if you have a bag of cereal and a little bit of water lab you can figure out how to make a meal. And I put a problem on the board and you only know one part of the problem you can figure out how to get to answer, it might not be taking further than not trying at all challenging continues again to pour into their potential because their parents are going to be removed and they're going to be and they're going to need to know how to think critically how to solve problems how to analyze. Street Smart personally get to where I

am because I am from how I was able to conquer and a woman compared to a male isn't as high but I can cry if I have the brainpower I have the experience. Reach such a great platform in life that they feel like there's no competition but also be humble absolutely you have to be humble and that's what that's all sometimes can be taunting task to do when you know what you're capable of all 74 my boys do not know what they're capable of that I did not serve my purpose this year you know.

So do you believe you know we've been talking about the single single gender classroom setting do you believe that the single-gender classroom setting contributes to good behavior of your students?

Interviewee: If I were teaching 6th grade student yes but who are there so many factors that contribute to my students behavior so be in a single gender setting that requires school in a uniform your hair too because you don't personally feel like it's is conducive to their learning but it's right now at this stage because it's about to change and you know when it gets crazy because they're just anxious. Internally once a one will I respect my brother you know what characteristic traits I can see how one person has been in the hallway longer than the other.

MSI should be that's exactly how it should be.

What does a typical classroom assignment or activity look like in your classroom and how effective is it for your student population?

Interviewee: Organized chaos daemons of a lot of time that I did not put you over here and your work independently get me verbally or you can write it I put you on a computer to try to get you your mind going to the really on a 3 to 4 different activities happening at once but they're learning the same. What is being presented in a different manner differentiation.

Express the importance of fostering a close relationship in building or creating a positive school culture for your students?

Interviewee: And it's going to be almost give a full statement I'm going to break it down to my student teachers to allow our students to trust that because you're going to be doing that at that moment your personal professional question or a learning experience so is it to you know Smith Coleman is a person I can come through and ask even if she's having a bad day I just noticed. It's almost second on the list of what to do to Be an Effective Teacher if it's if not for them and that's so important because if they come to school to do for eight and a half hours so it's important...did certain things as some people would look at school because we're a family you know we noticed that one of the parents go and do not do their laundry and just you know things to help keep them in a child's place we wear different hats and you have to know which one to put on.

Do you believe that African-American males struggle more in reading or math and explain why?

Interviewee: We speak before we read. I can have an amazing vocabulary and then it's going to be his number reading because truthfully would Matthew have to learn how to read you have to raise the foundation. They just they just they don't know how to read but it's more so I've never been exposed to the things that I say or paper you know like I've never seen it on paper before Coleman essay in parallel. I agree I agree completely with that being said that they struck that you feel like they struggle more in reading.

What types of interventions do you put in place personally for your students in math?

Interviewee: I noticed that a Dictionary provides some type of understanding of the word and I will be responsible for assessing you on your understanding I'm not going to give you a vocabulary that has the words on the left. Definition of identify I have never heard that before and I want to say I'm going to try to start doing that as well it's it is. The meaning of the word a teacher oh yeah oh yeah. Identify not Define.

Last question and this is going to be a little touchy but. Do you believe that the gender of a of the teacher impacts African-American male students

Interviewee: When it comes to academic achievement struggle with eternal need me but we're not connect because I know but brat for those students who struggle you know and in urine for a maternal relationship they're trying to satisfy me they're trying to learn for that validation it's a bit of a challenge for me because they're starting times where your behavior is a direct reflection of how you interact with your mother your grandmother your sister your aunt whoever taking care of you and because you feel as though they allow you to do it have to have the same expectation if if you have a curfew of 10 and you come home at 10:30 and don't get in trouble and I have a classroom policy of your homework is due by 11:59 oh yeah well I definitely appreciate you taking the time out to do this interview and I've learned a lot from you.

Eighth Grade ELA Teacher Interview

Interviewee: Okay so I've had the opportunity to serve as at eight grade ELA teacher as well as I'm do a partnership with between our 6th 7th and 8th grade team and started as a liaison in our leadership group and how long have you been I've been here this is my first year here I can definitely tell I would like to describe myself as a teacher a lot of the teaching that I've done has been in Corporate America so I have a corporate background okay but I was one of those people that decided to do a career change I asked where I was needed and I did it and I did a career change America coming into the educational field.

So we're just going to jump right into it. So what are some of the expected outcomes for African-American males who attend single-gender schools in your opinion on some of the expected outcomes?

Interviewee: First more self-awareness. More self-awareness...I think being in a single-gender school offers the opportunity for Scholars to take a deeper look in that area of self-awareness. I think they expected end is not to play off of what in the past might have been looked at strengths or weaknesses but more so meeting Regional Scholars where they are collected collectively meeting the scholars where they are. And by that I mean being able to Target those specific things that might be conducive to that gender for instance we know a lot of times our boys are more interested they would they function better when they're being get engaged they like being up on their feet they like being interactive if we're utilizing text they want texted they can see themselves and in doing that and providing those opportunities you were able to see what happened to the not only that that critical thinking you also able to pull into the imagination part of the ear that protect creativity and their analytical abilities.

So what resources are readily available to The Faculty for improving teaching and learning for African-American male students?

Interviewee: There is a wealth of resources...a well-educated staff a staff that is very aware of the environment that were in so whether or not it starts at the highest level of our administration team they are very aware. They're doing personal development in order to pass to create the climate in the school I think school climate is very important meeting that we are very aware of who will servicing so we're coming in with a purpose on purpose to serve our Scholars for one thing and I think individually you're aware of utilizing our skills in our strategies. First of all get acquainted with are Scholars because we must know them we must know them to leave and make it our business to get up to know our scholar I'm who they are collectively and as individuals. We're meeting them on both the academic and social Arena and then the reason why is because it's very difficult for me to meet a student academically when I don't understand where he comes I'm socially so by having a single gender environment I'm able to focus in the focus I'm able to have those Scholars together without maybe having some of those other entities that might have to start time served as a distraction in other areas.

How often do you attend professional development in why how important is it for you to attend professional development so that you are effective in the classroom?

Interviewee: Okay at least once a month at least once a month a lot of times twice a month formerly as far as school wide as far as faculty wide is concerned individually I try to give myself a weekly track of things to do I work it into my things to do whether not if that's participating in a podcast whether not that is reviewing a seminar that may have been available whether or not is doing a teacher share. I'm reading different newsletters keeping abreast of what is new and fresh in the industry those things that I know that I could take and I can immediately apply into the environment that I'm the reason why it is very important and the reason why is because we're in the environment that is ever-changing ever changes so with every new day there's a new opportunity as well as the

new opposition....opposition we have to always make sure we're bringing fresh bread from nothing stale every day we get a fresh opportunity to and I think one of the things about being an educator that I love so much is because I enjoy being a student and so I think really good educators are people who really enjoy being student because as Educators...the question of being a student it never end so not only I'm functioning as the role of an instructor but I'm also like. I'm learning from the people that I see and it's a two-way street it's a two-way street so a lot of times and asking those probing questions my Scholars are helping me to develop to know what it is that I can do to nourish with a need.

Explain to me briefly why African-American males learn differently from their counterparts in how does this why does this matter when it comes to academic achievement question?

It could be it could be the root of some heated discussion argument in regards to how are African-American males learn the first word that comes to my mind is cultural so I don't want to I don't look at it as far as a brain think I'm going to refer to it as a brain thing. Okay I think we have to adjust that we have to address for cultural differences then the social environment the social economic environment and I think that is the basis because everyone knows that the learning starts in the home has a mom and an educator I know that starts in the womb so they actually talk about. Women who are pregnant that they are there reading while they're child is still in the womb so a lot of times and because I'm a Ela teacher I'm very big on Words I Never My Children never Babble died in battle to my children because children language is spoken to them so of course parents who are well-educated have a tendency to use the types of vocabulary that help young children develop a higher level of cognition and vocabulary at a younger age so a lot of times again I'm seeing that it's not necessarily how the boys learn in comparison to their white counterparts or four people from other nationalities of cultures is the fact of the exposure...exposure has a lot to do with it or you yeah so that that exposure. Not a person because I die tell my stylist I said Champions don't make excuses they make adjustment and so I am a person of adjustment and as a matter of fact I love the so-called Underdog it's my place to be if I have all the if I can be any place that I would on any place to teach I wouldn't be any place besides where I am I wouldn't be any place other than that represented the environment of those students who are so-called the underdog who made come from a place of. Where there isn't a well there's not a library in the in the study they're not in a home with a study and a library they may not be with someone who parents who had who took advantage of higher education. Not an excuse and opportunity so I like to I like to partner with those students and show them the opportunity and let them know anything that you hadn't had to model to be modeled in front of you no excuses Lewis doesn't want the excuse if you don't have the role model than guess what tag you're it you are the role model make sure that those coming behind you and the education that you're receiving at this time that another young man won't be able to come back after knowing you and be able to say the same things that you said because the man before you didn't do it so if you don't have it you're it you're it and so I speak to that leader in them and I think in our environment here we are focused on leadership...leadership 42 those things that you know as a young man regardless of what

your occupation or station is in life. Going to have to have something certain qualities and Leadership is one of those Integrity is one of those Florida to tenacity those things that are transferable skills you can use them wherever you are.

How important is it for you as an Ela teacher to make the curriculum and I saw it today in the class was very evident to make the curriculum very relevant to who and rigorous at the same time for African-American males?

Interviewee: It is imperative...imperative and the reason why is because for so long are young men have not seen themselves in a positive life whether or not it has been in the media with a night it's been in the home whether or not it has been in in the in the in the vast amount of places that they may find themselves a lot of times are African American men are searching you know they're searching to find themselves a positive a positive role model in those places someone that they can identify with so I think it is so I think as a Ela teacher because communication. Communication is...is the ticket I tell them I say will uniform school...and so not only first of all let me say this I asked my style as I said guys I turned it into a writing prompt I said when old man Opportunity Knocks at the door of your life will he find you sleeping or prepared when old man Opportunity Knocks at the at the doors of your life where you find you prepared for sleeping and so what I mean by that is that if you do your due diligence opportunity is going to find you...to have the opportunity and when you have the opportunity not only do I want you to show up and I want you to be able to open your mouth and articulate your stuff at the man that you are and not just be able to articulate yourself and represent yourself but represent the community that you came from represent the culture that you represent the school that vested into you. Best represents your family who believes in you that's what I need you to be able to do vocally we know that there's power in the pan I need you to be able to write a letter that is I need you to be able to meticulous do your educational process and put together an essay that will be impactful and Powerful one of the things that I like to use that I share with you earlier I love to use words of affirmation. Words of affirmation I need you to speak life into your situation because it is a reason why young black man come up under search. I'm such great adversity and I asked my style as I said have you ever seen a robber break into an empty house is because you have wealth inside of you oh well that's because you have some well that's because you have something to offer and through English language and literature it is my job to connect you to the society in which you live in and show you how you are a powerful part in the progression of that community and at that society and let you know that you do not have to align with what they say about you, that you can be a Trailblazer that you came you can be a game-changer and it starts in this room.

Interviewer: Like I'm getting I'm getting a little windy or am I feel like I'm re-living when I was in Middle School. I'm so.

Do you believe that...Do you believe that single-gender instruction truly contributes to good behavior for African-American males?

Interviewee: I think it can... I believe that it can again I think it's a raise level of consciousness.

I think we have we have like...like members who can serve as each other's Brothers Keepers and our environment where male environment so we can see what my brother's keeper really looks like so I believe it can be very instrumental. If you could what would a typical classroom assignment or activity look like for your students and how effective is it for the African-American okay. I believe that I'm that the ideal the ideal lesson incorporated vision from different perspectives the ideal lesson gives you the opportunity to hear. To speak and to listen I need to hear it hit all three component I need you to hear I need you to speak and I need you I need you to be active who actively listening actively speaking and actively writing at all time and I think if I think the ideal lesson will incorporate all three of those so it is challenging your brain to either do some very good listening to be articulate in your speaking and in your thought processes and then to produce it through riding through the written word.

I love it I love it.

Can you express the importance of building that positive connection as you stated before even trying to meet the needs of the steel because often times African-American males feel misunderstood I know I did at one point so how do you how do you how important is that is part of the foundational pieces if I can describe it like that is one of the foundational pieces and if somebody were to ask me how do you accomplish it you accomplished it with honesty and transparency when I am transparent with my student when I am not just their teacher I'm not attempting to be their friend but I am their teacher but I I need to let them know that I too have boner abilities I to have things that I am continuously working on one I have stress but I also have weaknesses that I have areas of challenge so stupid. I need to know that the people who are leading the people in Authority that they're human and that those that the reason why they're in those places of Authority or now I have adult villages to be able to teach you is because I have that when you said I have had the same issues and concerns and because I have been in those places where I was just planning what I wanted like to look like and have not yet walked into it so now I'm just showing up not necessarily always as a teacher but sometimes it's a coach at the Colts.

Do you believe that African-American males struggle more in reading or math and explain briefly why and reading and the reason why?

Interviewee: I want to say it's a developmental piece. First and foremost, the portion of our brain I think I want to call it the hippocampus in the brain talks about the development that's also what they looked at when they compare girls and girls and guys I'm the reason why a lot of times on our young ladies will have a different level of fluency the vocabulary will be different and the ability to retain information both short and long term for boys the recognition of of letters to put in together of word putting together to make sentences and paragraphs a lot of times have to do with that

developmental stage that maybe I'm not necessarily going to stay a little slower. Developing the way it's supposed to for a boy right okay so I think that's sometimes in a situation where there is both males and females a lot of times were teaching to the female stew is the diet or the female student and the way that the female student performed an alarm and a lot of time does not that the male student....He just need some more Custom Design so a single-sex environment give him his custom design that he needs to be able to thrive completely agree.

What kinds of responses to intervention do you put in place or this institution puts in place for males?

Interviewee: First of all, accountability is the first word that comes to mind I'm we are we are very clear on our expectations of Home registration here at the school parents not only come to orientation but they receive a very detailed hand book outlining what makes us special what makes us different expectations that are here that you might not have found at another institution that you were at so I think clearly defined expectations is one thing I think also each teacher we have our we have our thing that we do independently in our classroom one of the things that my Scholars know when you come in to take your book bags and hang them up in the back of the room unless you all don want to do it. Simple things simple things of defining the expectation it sets the tone and when you know what the expectation is....I'm expecting you to follow it and then you know that we operate on a merit and demerit system here so Scholars know that they can earn they can earn Merit which gets them opportunities as far as field trips prizes free time and they can also learn demerits as well and that's four different types of offenses that are not in line and in keeping with the with the school called and your individual class codes okay.

Do you believe that the gender of a teacher truly impacts African-American male academic achievement?

Interviewee: Yeah I know it's tough but what I want to say about that is and I'm going to use an example I tell my Scholars I said when you going to your individual classroom I want you to be transported to the room that you're in. When you coming to my ELA class, you are coming in as an author you are coming bring your off you are an author I'm in a room with a room full of Authors. When you are in math, are mathematician. When you are science, you a scientist when your history you are historian. So I need you to see me as another author and I need you to respect me because of my craft, the same way I'm going to respect you and because we have a love for the same thing and we have a common goal. I'm taking out the gender of the male the female and now we're talking as a collective team now we're office where author. I love you and if you can just see us as author and not see me as a female teacher who made me disconnect it another thing. I do is I bring in other like I'm a mom so I have a son and a slightly older than the students that I teach so I incorporate some experiences that I've had to let them know of course again that brings in the human quality you know they know that their teachers are human hair me for this oh you can't give me with that he prepared me and so you know just showing that human quality is well I think Bridget any Gap that could possibly be there. But I must say that I think of one of those valuable commodity that we do have our

men who decide to come into education particularly African American men. Again, it is our boys getting the opportunity to see what is possible and for you too I am so excited about being an educator I tell everybody I am not an educator by chance I am an educator by choice I made a transition into education at a time in my life where I was not pressed to do anything but I was at a place in my life where I had to choose where I wanted to so my service and education is where I have chosen to stole my service and they need to know that through education you create a legacy because when you teach one student you might have taught a hundred each child is connected to a lineage that you going to touch through education in the class. So you let them know hey this job right here this one of the best jobs in the world because I get to touch the generations that haven't even been born through what I'm teaching you.

Instructional Leader Interview

What are some of the expected outcomes for African-American males who attend single gender schools?

Interviewee: Centralized by the founder of the purpose of. African-American males was because. The relevancy for any student to take part. Awesome cultural Realm. But we have a partnership with the Stem Program, Transit Program, Fairway and construction every day. Something inside of that and we try and make decisions that are in the best interest of our students.

What resources are available to faculty for improving teaching and learning for African-American males?

Interviewee: In terms of instructional strategies. Ways to become better teachers to help all of our teachers become master teachers. Pedagogy of the strategies to be a master teacher. Teacher efficacy is huge. WE want teachers to the table so that we can hear extra help for that extra professional development. It has to be called learning opportunities are in English that's going to be a disconnect. There needs to be a level the playing field.

How often do you attend professional development sessions? How important is it to implement gender-specific instructional strategies in the classroom?

Interviewee: I don't have any experience in the middle or upper class in everything. Discovery credit take every. Technology people social media but if you present to me materials and experiences that have some cultural relevance to what I like that's what makes them tick and so we have to embed instruction into what type of interest they like. So they have an interest not so much that they learn differently but what they do.

Explain why African-American male students learn differently from their counterparts? Why does this matter when it comes to academic achievement?

Interviewee: Honestly, I believe that AA males have some developmentally challenges and social issues that they are faced with which makes it hard for them to focus in the learning environment. Umm, I can say that our students are cut from a different cloth and

we have to be in-tune with them and pay attention to that. Knowing our students and where they come from, we have got to provide them with culturally-relevant and relatable material. In my opinion, it is a cultural thing and that is the most critical aspect of teaching our students.

Why is it important to make the curriculum rigorous and relevant for African-American males?

Interviewee: Sigh. Um, as I said before, the curriculum has got to be culturally-driven and relatable for our students. Our institution offers classes that are STEM-based and research shows that boys are more interested in science and math. So, umm...we use that to our advantage and we also try to provide the students with a plethora of resources to make them successful. Another thing to consider is the fact that we live in a technology-driven society. Our boys know all about social media, the cell phones, and even how to access the smart boards in the classrooms. To me that is amazing how technologically advanced this generation is.

Do you believe that single-gender instruction contributes to good behavior for African-American males? Why?

Interviewee: Absolutely. I definitely would agree with that. You know our students truly benefit from a single-gender environment because it levels the playing field in the classroom. Now, we struggle with disciplinary issues like any other school would but the problem is...our males we serve are emotional but they don't understand why they become emotional and how to express the way that they feel. So, they act out to get attention from their peers and their teachers. But bringing it back, the culture that we have set is what drives good behavior or PBIS as I like to call it. Our merit and demerit system is something that helps with behavior as well. We have seen that the merit system is most effective for "our" students. And I think that we are making small gains in handling our discipline here at the school.

Please describe some of the classroom assignments and activities that you would normally plan for your students. How effective is it for African-American males?

Interviewee: Hmm...you know, since I am an administrator I am not in the classroom as much however, we support and encourage our staff to provide quality instruction. We all teachers to work together in PLCs so that they can create a teaching culture and share different yet effective strategies with each other. Instruction that can be meaningful to the curriculum and easy for the students to grasp. It takes a lot to keep the attention of AA males so as a teacher you have to be creative, innovative and intentional when teaching. If all of that takes place with fidelity, then the learning will come.

Can you express the importance of creating and fostering a positive school culture for African-American males?

Interviewee: That is a great question...culture is probably one of the most important things here. We have come a long way and I have been here from the beginning. We pride ourselves for building a positive, motivating and inspiring culture for our students.

Every morning, the students come in and they go into formation and in that formation they recite inspiring poetry to start the day off. The poems are tools for the students to use as motivation and inspiration to get through the day. Then the teachers share motivational tid bits with their homerooms to create that positive energy for the students. That is what gets them through the day. It is that culture that gives them that hope and drive to be successful.

Do you believe that African-American males struggle more in reading or math? Please explain why? What kinds of responses to intervention are put into place to aid gender-specific weaknesses?

Interviewee: I would have to say reading. Reading is something that AA males struggle with. If the text is not interesting, then they won't read it. We have to make it fun and engaging for the students so they will want to read. With reading being a fundamental skill, if they suffer in that then they will struggle in all of their other classes. So as a school initiative, we encourage our students to read texts that they can relate to and seem themselves in. We allow our students to choose the books they want to read. We provide a program called Achieve 3000 and the data has shown that the program has been highly effective for our students.

Do you believe that the gender of the teacher impacts African-American male academic achievement? Please explain your rationale.

Interviewee: Here at Scholarship School, we try not to look at gender. Gender is just a physical role or sex that everyone has. It is more about the connection, the relationship, the mentoring that takes place between the teacher and the students. That is what matters. Our students require a lot of guidance and nurturing from our staff so we pay attention to that. We give them tough love all the time. We show that we care and that we are here for them. That's all they want; they want to be cared for and appreciated regardless of the gender.

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